

## Dam Safety

There are over twenty-five dams in Henrico County that are potentially regulated by the State. Recent state actions will have an effect on private dam owners, members of homeowners associations that own and maintain dams and the County, which owns and operates dams in several parks and maintains public roads over four regulated dams.

Virginia revised the regulations concerning Dam Safety in 2009. [4 VAC 50-20](#) modifies and strengthens the Operation and Maintenance requirements for Owners of “Impounding Structures”.

- New Hazard Classifications
- Spillway capacity upgrades may be required
- Prepare and submit Dam Break Inundation Zone Maps
- Ensure regular documented inspections
- Prepare and test Emergency Action Plans

### **Other State Actions**

A new Virginia law went into effect July 1, 2009 that manages development in areas downstream of dams. [VAC 15.2-2243.1](#) requires localities to consider “Dam Break Inundation Zones” (DBIZ) in permitting decisions.

The law requires that the:

- County must review the owner-supplied DBIZ map
- If development is proposed within zone:
  - The County must notify DCR's Dam Safety staff and cannot issue a development permit
  - If the development would change Hazard Class, the County can only issue a permit after the developer:
    - Prepares a “contract ready” engineering estimate for spillway capacity and other upgrades
    - Escrow 50% of the cost for up to six years

Additional details on the new law and/or regulations can be found at [I:\Dam Safety\Va Code & Regulations\dsmajchanges.pdf](#). Robert Bennett, P.E., Director, Division of Floodplain Management and Dam Safety (804/786-3914) can provide additional details.

Citizens with questions are encouraged to visit the DCR Dam Safety and Floodplain Management web site at ([DCR.Virginia.Gov/dam\\_safety\\_and\\_floodplains](http://DCR.Virginia.Gov/dam_safety_and_floodplains)) for general information or contact the Henrico County Department of Public Works, Design Division (804/501-7460) for assistance.