



Ohio Revised Code

Section 1521.062 Inspection of dams and levees.

Effective: January 1, 2016

Legislation: House Bill 64 - 131st General Assembly

(A) All dams and levees constructed in this state and not exempted by this section or by the chief of the division of water resources under section 1521.06 of the Revised Code shall be inspected periodically by the chief, except for classes of dams that, in accordance with rules adopted under this section, are required to be inspected by registered professional engineers who have been approved for that purpose by the chief. The inspection shall ensure that continued operation and use of the dam or levee does not constitute a hazard to life, health, or property. Periodic inspections shall not be required of the following structures:

(1) A dam that is less than ten feet in height and has a storage capacity of not more than fifty acre-feet at the elevation of the top of the dam, as determined by the chief. For the purposes of this section, the height of a dam shall be measured from the natural stream bed or lowest ground elevation at the downstream or outside limit of the dam to the elevation of the top of the dam.

(2) A dam, regardless of height, that has a storage capacity of not more than fifteen acre-feet at the elevation of the top of the dam, as determined by the chief;

(3) A dam, regardless of storage capacity, that is six feet or less in height, as determined by the chief;

(4) A dam or levee belonging to a class exempted by the chief;

(5) A dam or levee that has been exempted in accordance with rules adopted under section 1521.064 of the Revised Code.

(B) In accordance with rules adopted under this section, the owner of a dam that is in a class of dams that is designated in the rules for inspection by registered professional engineers shall obtain the services of a registered professional engineer who has been approved by the chief to conduct the periodic inspection of dams pursuant to schedules and other standards and procedures established in the rules. The registered professional engineer shall prepare a report of the inspection in accordance



with the rules and provide the inspection report to the dam owner who shall submit it to the chief. A dam that is designated under the rules for inspection by a registered professional engineer, but that is not inspected within a five-year period may be inspected by the chief at the owner's expense.

(C) Intervals between periodic inspections shall be determined by the chief, but shall not exceed five years.

(D) In the case of a dam or levee that the chief inspects, the chief shall furnish a report of the inspection to the owner of the dam or levee. With regard to a dam or levee that has been inspected, either by the chief or by a registered professional engineer, and that is the subject of an inspection report prepared or received by the chief, the chief shall inform the owner of any required repairs, maintenance, investigations, and other remedial and operational measures. The chief shall order the owner to perform such repairs, maintenance, investigations, or other remedial or operational measures as the chief considers necessary to safeguard life, health, or property. The order shall permit the owner a reasonable time in which to perform the needed repairs, maintenance, investigations, or other remedial measures, and the cost thereof shall be borne by the owner. All orders of the chief are subject to appeal as provided in Chapter 119. of the Revised Code. The attorney general, upon written request of the chief, may bring an action for an injunction against any person who violates this section or to enforce an order of the chief made pursuant to this section.

(E) The owner of a dam or levee shall monitor, maintain, and operate the structure and its appurtenances safely in accordance with state rules, terms and conditions of permits, orders, and other requirements issued pursuant to this section or section 1521.06 of the Revised Code. The owner shall fully and promptly notify the division of water resources and other responsible authorities of any condition that threatens the safety of the structure and shall take all necessary actions to safeguard life, health, and property.

(F) Before commencing the repair, improvement, alteration, or removal of a dam or levee, the owner shall file an application including plans, specifications, and other required information with the division and shall secure written approval of the application by the chief. Emergency actions by the owner required to safeguard life, health, or property are exempt from this requirement. The chief may, by rule, define maintenance, repairs, or other remedial measures of a routine nature that are exempt from this requirement.



(G) The chief may remove or correct, at the expense of the owner, any unsafe structures found to be constructed or maintained in violation of this section or section 1521.06 of the Revised Code. In the case of an owner other than a governmental agency, the cost of removal or correction of any unsafe structure, together with a description of the property on which the unsafe structure is located, shall be certified by the chief to the county auditor and placed by the county auditor upon the tax duplicate. This cost is a lien upon the lands from the date of entry and shall be collected as other taxes and returned to the division. In the case of an owner that is a governmental agency, the cost of removal or correction of any unsafe structure shall be recoverable from the owner by appropriate action in a court of competent jurisdiction.

(H) If the condition of any dam or levee is found, in the judgment of the chief, to be so dangerous to the safety of life, health, or property as not to permit time for the issuance and enforcement of an order relative to repair, maintenance, or operation, the chief shall employ any of the following remedial means necessary to protect life, health, and property:

- (1) Lower the water level of the lake or reservoir by releasing water;
- (2) Completely drain the lake or reservoir;
- (3) Take such other measures or actions as the chief considers necessary to safeguard life, health, and property.

The chief shall continue in full charge and control of the dam or levee until the structure is rendered safe. The cost of the remedy shall be recoverable from the owner of the structure by appropriate action in a court of competent jurisdiction.

(I) The chief may accept and expend gifts, bequests, and grants from the United States government or from any other public or private source and may contract with the United States government or any other agency or entity for the purpose of carrying out the dam safety functions set forth in this section and section 1521.06 of the Revised Code.

(J) In accordance with Chapter 119. of the Revised Code, the chief may adopt, and may amend or



rescind, rules that do all of the following:

- (1) Designate classes of dams for which dam owners must obtain the services of a registered professional engineer to periodically inspect the dams and to prepare reports of the inspections for submittal to the chief;
 - (2) Establish standards in accordance with which the chief must approve or disapprove registered professional engineers to inspect dams together with procedures governing the approval process;
 - (3) Establish schedules, standards, and procedures governing periodic inspections and standards and procedures governing the preparation and submittal of inspection reports;
 - (4) Establish provisions regarding the enforcement of this section and rules adopted under it.
- (K) The owner of a dam or levee shall notify the chief in writing of a change in ownership of the dam or levee prior to the exchange of the property.