

Dam Safety Fees

Focus on

There are two primary types of dam safety fees that the Department of Ecology (Ecology) must collect:

- **Construction permit fees** for examining plans and specifications for dams before they are built or modified.
- **Periodic inspection fees** for inspecting dams after they are built.

Fees for constructing or modifying dams

Construction permit fees are charged on a per project basis for new dams and modification of existing dams. The fee for the construction permit is based on dam height and crest length (the length of the top of the dam).

Payment procedures for construction permit fees require dam owners to include a minimum initial payment with their application for a construction permit for either a new dam or modification of an existing dam. Ecology will then bill the unpaid balance.

The **minimum initial fee** to include with your construction permit application is \$1,977.00

You can view the current fee table for permit review for a new dam at Ecology web site: <https://ecology.wa.gov/water-shorelines/water-supply/dams/info-for-dam-owners/fees>.

For **modifications to existing dams**, the fee is a percentage of the permit fee for a new dam, but can be no less than the minimum initial fee for a construction permit. Project features to be modified and whether the impoundment capacity increases significantly (the “significant enlargement”* factor) affect the fee.

Table 1, on page 2, shows the percentage charged for modifications to dam features, with or without significant enlargement.

Other fees and fee exemptions

- For **dam safety deficiency repairs** required by Ecology, fees are equal to the minimum initial fee for construction permits.
- For reclamation of mining operation dams, fees are equal to the minimum initial fee for construction permits.
- For **removal of a dam** with safety deficiencies, the fee is \$10.
- There is no fee for routine maintenance, normal replacement, or minor repairs.
- There is no fee for review of conceptual plans, changes required during review, or construction change orders.
- To enforce dam safety requirements, Ecology may also impose sanctions through regulatory orders or civil penalties.
- When an emergency condition poses an imminent threat to life, Ecology may take necessary actions. All costs incurred by Ecology are charged to the dam’s owner.
- The cost of an expert opinion is negotiable.

Paying Fees

Ecology collects prorated **periodic inspection fees** annually for inspection of significant and high hazard dams. *Hazard levels* refer to the number of homes (or equivalent population) at risk downstream in event of dam failure: 1-2 homes for significant, 3 or more for high.

Table 1: Dam Modification Fee as a percentage of the fee for new dam construction

Feature Modified	With Significant Enlargement*	Without Significant Enlargement*
Spillway(s)	35%	25%
Impounding Barrier	35%	25%
Appurtenant Works and Miscellaneous Construction Elements	10%	10%

* Significant Enlargement means any modification of an existing dam that results in the dam height or normal pool height being increased by an amount greater than 5 feet, which also represents a 10% or greater increase in dam height or normal pool height over that which existed prior to the modification. (WAC 173-175-030)

Annual fees, for 5-year inspection cycles, are:

- \$1208 for high hazard dams.
- \$881 for significant hazard dams.
- There are exceptions to the normal periodic inspection fees shown above:
- For permitted dams less than 10 years old, no fees are charged.
- For permitted high hazard dams more than 10 but less than 20 years old, fees equal the fee for significant hazard dams.
- For impoundments with multiple dams, a single facility fee is charged based on the dam with the highest hazard.
- For multicell impoundments, such as multicell wastewater lagoons, a single facility fee is charged based on the highest hazard cell.
- For non-routine and public request inspections, no fees are charged.

The dam owner of record is responsible for paying all fees.

Fees must be paid online or by a check or money order payable to the Department of Ecology, and mailed to:

Department of Ecology Cashiering Unit
PO Box 47611
Olympia WA 98504-7611

Fee balances are due within 45 days after Ecology mails your invoice. Ecology considers your fees as delinquent if we do not receive them by the due date. If a check is returned for insufficient funds, we consider the invoice unpaid.

Ecology may issue an enforcement order to dam owners with delinquent accounts, or refer the account for collection.

Paid fees are nonrefundable.

Related Information

- Please visit our website at:
<http://www.ecy.wa.gov/programs/wr/dams/dss.html>



Dam Safety Office
samantha.long@ecy.wa.gov
360-407-6603



To request an ADA accommodation, contact Ecology by phone at 360-407-6872 or email at WRpubs@ecy.wa.gov, or visit <https://ecology.wa.gov/accessibility>. For Relay Service or TTY call 711 or 877-833-6341.