

**NATURAL RESOURCES CONSERVATION SERVICE
CONSERVATION PRACTICE STANDARD**

DAM, DIVERSION

(No. or Ft.)

CODE 348

DEFINITION

A structure built to divert all or part of the water from a waterway or a stream.

PURPOSE

- To divert all or part of the water from a waterway in such a manner that it can be controlled and used for beneficial purposes such as irrigation or livestock supply, fire control, municipal or industrial uses, development of renewable energy systems, or recreation.
- To divert periodic damaging flows from one watercourse to another watercourse thereby reducing the damage potential of the flows.

CONDITIONS WHERE PRACTICE APPLIES

This standard applies to structures of a permanent nature that are constructed of materials having an expected life span consistent with the purpose for which the structure is designed. It does not apply where [Conservation Practice Standard \(CPS\) 362, Diversion](#); [CPS 402, Dam](#); or [CPS 410, Grade Stabilization Structure](#), would be used.

This practice applies where:

- A diversion dam is needed as an integral part of an irrigation system or a waterspreading system designed to facilitate the conservation use of soil and water resources.
- Diversion of water from an unstable watercourse to a stable watercourse is desirable.

- The water supply available is adequate for the purpose for which it is to be diverted.
- Adverse environmental impacts resulting from the installation of the practice can be overcome.

CRITERIA

The installation and operation of this practice shall comply with all federal, state, and local laws, rules, and regulations. Laws, rules, and regulations of particular concern include those involving water rights, land use, pollution control, property easements, wetlands, preservation of cultural resources, and endangered species.

The owner is responsible for securing necessary permits, complying with all laws and regulations, and meeting legal requirements applicable to the installation, operation, and maintenance of the dam and associated structures.

Environmental impacts. The impact of a proposed dam on water quality, fish and wildlife habitat, forests, and visual resources shall be evaluated. The techniques and measures necessary to overcome the undesirable effects shall be identified and addressed.

Materials. All materials to be used in constructing the diversion dam and appurtenances shall have the strength, durability, and workability required to meet the installation and service conditions of the site.

Structural design. Appurtenant structures shall be designed to withstand all anticipated loads.

Outlet works. If part of the flow is to be diverted, the outlet works must provide for positive control of both maximum and minimum flow rates consistent with the purpose for which

the diversion is made. The outlet works must provide for safe diversion of all expected flows and consider such hazards as the potential for erosion, cavitation, and reduction in flow capacity due to the buildup of debris and sediment.

Bypass works. The bypass works must be capable of passing all flows needed to satisfy downstream priorities and all flows in excess of diversion requirements, including expected flood flows. This may require a combination of orifices, weirs, and gates designed to meet the requirements of the site. The bypass works must provide for safe bypass of all expected flows, considering such hazards as the potential for erosion, cavitation, and reduction in flow capacity due to the buildup of debris.

Special-purpose works. If debris, bed load materials, or sediments are present under flow conditions subject to diversion, provision shall be made to bypass or remove materials that may be detrimental to the functioning of the outlet works, to other parts of the works, or to areas to which diversion is made. This may require the use of settling basins, debris traps, trash guards, or sluiceways—depending on site conditions.

Vegetation. Disturbed areas that are not otherwise covered or protected shall be vegetated as soon as practicable after construction. If soil or climatic conditions preclude the use of vegetation and protection is needed, non-vegetative materials such as mulches, gravel, and rock riprap may be used. As a minimum, seedbed preparation, seeding, fertilizing, and mulching shall comply with [CPS 342, Critical Area Planting](#); [CPS 484, Mulching](#); or instructions in other local guides. The vegetation shall be maintained, and undesirable species shall be controlled.

CONSIDERATIONS

The effects of this practice on water quantity, water quality, and the environment should be considered during the planning process.

Consider the following:

- Effects on the water budget and on the volume and rate of runoff, infiltration, evaporation, transpiration, deep percolation, and groundwater recharge.
- Effects of the use of diverted waters for irrigation.
- Effects on the original watercourse, on the newly constructed watercourse, and on the area to and from where the water is being diverted.
- Effects on erosion and the movement of sediment, pathogens, and soluble and sediment-attached substances carried by runoff.
- Potential temperature changes in downstream waters resulting from differences in bank shading in different watercourses.
- Potential changes in the amount of soluble substances infiltrating and available for groundwater recharge as well as the potential for salt pick-up.
- Potential for introducing new plant or animal species to either the upstream or downstream waters.
- Effects on the natural migration of fish.

PLANS AND SPECIFICATIONS

Plans and specifications for installing diversion dams shall be in keeping with this standard and shall describe the requirements for applying the practice to achieve its intended purpose.

OPERATION AND MAINTENANCE

Provisions shall be made for operation and maintenance (O&M) requirements. Typical maintenance may include the removal of accumulated trash and debris from the structure and the repair of gates, screens, and other appurtenances.

The [O&M plan sheet](#) can be used with site-specific recommendations added as needed. For larger, more complex diversion dams, a site-specific plan as outlined in [NEM Section 511.11C\(17\)](#) should instead be written.