

DEPARTMENT OF WATER RESOURCES

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**Division of Safety of Dams****Notice of Intent to Update - Dam Safety Inspection and Reevaluation Protocols
to Incorporate Risk Informed Decision Making into the California Dam Safety Program
March 16, 2020**

This notification is being provided as required by section 6103(b)(2) of the California Water Code, which was enacted by Assembly Bill 1270 on February 26, 2018. The Division of Safety of Dams (DSOD) intends to modify its Dam Safety Inspection and Reevaluation Protocols (Protocols) based on recommendations from an independent Technical Advisory Panel consisting of representatives from recognized national dam safety and dam safety risk management organizations.

The panels primary recommendation was that DSOD develop, implement, and integrate Risk Informed Decision Making (RIDM) into its Dam Safety Program as appropriate for a large State regulatory program and generally consistent with best practice guidelines adopted by Federal dam safety organizations.

DSOD's use of RIDM will improve the resiliency of dams in California by systematically identifying dams that pose the greatest risk to the public. RIDM provides value to the California Dam Safety Program by prioritizing the reevaluations of higher hazard dams, increasing confidence that critical deficiencies are identified, and informing decisions on detailed dam reviews. Since RIDM systematically identifies existing dam deficiencies, it will facilitate communication of dam safety risks to dam owners, stakeholders, and the public. Dam owners will be better able to justify expenditures on dam related improvements and cost-effective options for more rapidly achieving reduced dam safety risks.

RIDM will be integrated into the Dam Safety Program in a phased approach and is expected to be a multi-year effort. The plan and schedule for the implementation of RIDM will consist of a three-year pilot study with the anticipation of having amended protocols published in 2024. Following adoption of the new protocols, DSOD will begin formalized risk studies of dams with "High" and "Extremely High" downstream hazard classifications. DSOD will continue to provide updated information as this new effort gets underway to further bolster dam safety in California.

If you have any questions or need additional information, please see the contact information on our webpage: <https://water.ca.gov/damsafety/>.