Developing Emergency Action Plans

Using the NRCS Sample EAP "Fillable Form" Template

Emergency Action Plans

Owners and operators of high hazard dams have a responsibility to develop emergency action plans (EAP) and to keep them current. These plans are developed to reduce the risk to loss of life and property if the dam fails.

Many dam owners may not know where to start in developing EAPS or what to include in them.

Multi-Agency/Organization Work Group

In 2004, the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) and the Association of State Dam Safety Officials (ASDSO) launched a joint effort to develop a sample EAP for earthen high hazard dams.

A multi-agency work group was formed. This work group gathered good examples of EAPS form various state and federal agencies, solicited "lessons learned" from persons who had experienced activations of their EAPS, and developed a draft sample EAP that was routed for comment to many groups and organizations.

Based upon the information gathered and comments received, NRCS revised agency policy relating to content and format of EAPs and prepared a final sample EAP. An electronic "fillable form" template, instructions, and helpful hints to prepare site specific EAPs were also developed.

The electronic "fillable form" template may be edited as necessary to adapt the format and content as necessary to meet state or local requirements and site-specific situations.

These documents are now available to the public on the NRCS website (see following instructions on how to access these documents).

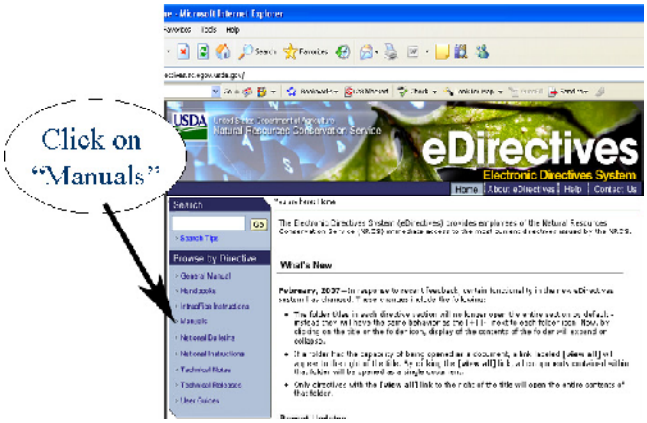
Main Elements of NRCS Sample EAP:

- EAP Overview
- Roles/Responsibilities
- Steps 1 & 2: Emergency Level Determination
- Step 3: Notification and Communication
- Step 4: Expected Actions
- Step 5: Termination and Follow-up
- Maintenance/Exercising
- Appendices

Obtaining a Copy of the NRCS Sample EAP Documents:

Go to the eDirectives(electronic directive system) on the NRCS website by typing in:
http://directives.sc.egov.usda.gov

This will bring you to this page.



Clicking on "*Manuals*" will take you to the page that has a list of titles, Click on "*Title 180*", then on "*National O&M Manual*", then on "*Subpart F-Emergency Action Plan*". This shows the NRCS policy concerning EAPs. Scroll down to "*Section 500.52B*" for the Sample EAP, EAP fillable form template, and helpful hints.

Features to Make the EAP Easier to Use

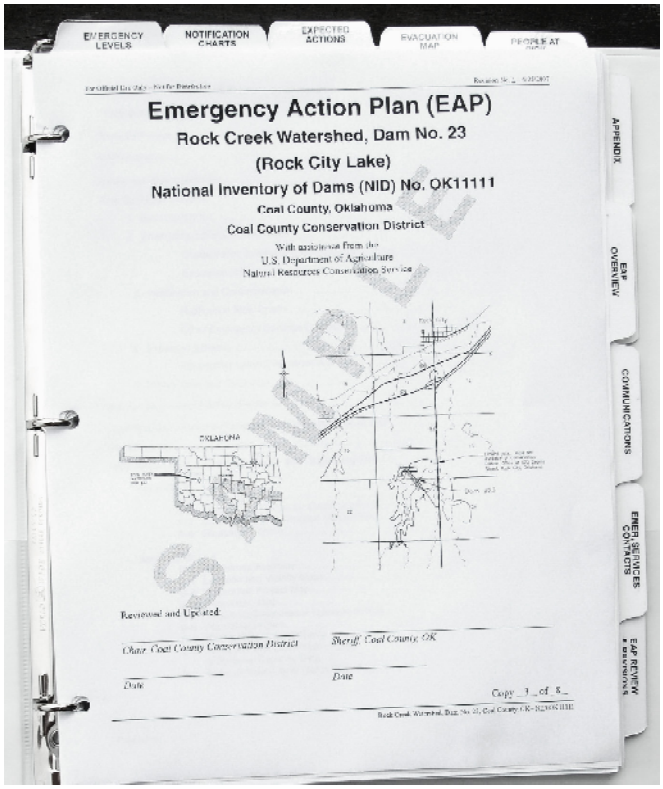
The following tips are suggested for making site-specific EAPs easier to use:

- Place the EAP in a three-ring binder for durable field use.
- Use top "hot buttons" divider tabs to quickly access important sections during an emergency.
- Use side divider tabs for major sections for use during training, annual reviews, and updating (see instructions on how to obtain preprinted divider tabs)
- Use headers and footers to identify each sheet with dam name in case sheets get separated.
- Number each copy of the final EAP and maintain a record of the person who received each numbered copy to help assure all official holders receive future updates and revisions.

Obtaining Preprinted Sets of Divider Tabs

Non-NRCS entities may obtain up to 15 sets of preprinted divider tabs by following these steps:

- Access the following url: http://landcare.nrcs.usda.gov
- Input "210-020" in the first input box and click "*Search*"
- A screen with the description of the divider tabs will come up, *click on "Add to Basket"*
- Enter the quantity you wish to order (15 maximum for non-NRCS orders).
- Click on *"Update Basket"*
- Click on *"Checkout";* then enter your shipping address information
- Click on "*Next"; if* you have successfully placed your order, you will get a confirmation that reads, *"Your order has been received."*
- All orders are shipped within 3-5 business days. The NRCS divider tabs are provided to you at no charge!



It is suggested that the EAPS be placed into three ring binders, with "hot" button tabs across the top and other divider tabs on the side.

For Questions or More Information, Contact:

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