

Small Raised Reservoirs Briefing Note

What is a Small Raised Reservoir?

A small raised reservoir holds or has the potential to hold more than 10,000 (but less than 25,000) cubic metres of water above the natural ground level of any part of the surrounding land. This is approximately 4 Olympic-size swimming pools or bigger. Small raised reservoirs in England are not currently covered by reservoir safety legislation. The Reservoirs Act 1975 only applies to large raised reservoirs, which are those reservoirs capable of holding more than 25,000 cubic metres of water above ground.



We are carrying out an information gathering exercise to find out more about the small raised reservoirs in England.

Why we are asking for this information and what we will do with it.

Following the Balmforth review of the serious incident at Toddbrook reservoir in 2019, the Government is reviewing and reforming reservoir safety legislation in England. As a part of this work, Defra is considering whether the regulation of reservoirs in England should be extended to cover small raised reservoirs.

Therefore, we are asking reservoir owners to volunteer any information they have on their small reservoirs to us. This is to help inform Defra's decision on any potential future regulation. The more reservoirs we are aware of, the better informed we can be as to whether and if so what, legislation is needed.

Do you have a body of water on your land?

If you have a body of water on your land, it may be a reservoir. A reservoir is normally an artificial lake where water is stored. Most reservoirs are formed by constructing a dam across a river. The term reservoir includes all dams, embankments or other structures that retain water, as well as the wetted area. A reservoir can also be formed from a natural lake whose outlet has been dammed to control the water level.

A reservoir is raised if the water would escape if the dam, embankment, or other structure retaining it was removed or damaged. Water which is stored below ground level that cannot escape is not included within the capacity calculation.

Reservoirs are often referred to by different terms and have a wide variety of uses, these could include:

- Water storage
- Irrigation ponds
- Waste lagoons
- Ornamental lakes
- Recreation/amenity
- Flood storage areas
- Hydropower generation

Where do I submit this information?

We have created a form for you to submit the information on your reservoir. [Click here.](#)

What information would you like from me?

Reservoir Details

Reservoir name

Reservoir Location – Ordnance Survey National grid reference of the approximate centre of the reservoir

Estimated maximum volume of the reservoir when full in cubic metres (m³)

Name of the individual, company or organisation that owns or operates the reservoir

Address of the individual, company or organisation that owns or operates the reservoir

Please provide an email address of the best person to contact

If you know it, you can also supply the following:

Reservoir Type: Impounding or Non-Impounding

Maximum height of the dam in metres (relative to the surrounding natural ground level)

Level of the top of the dam in metres above ordnance datum (mAOD)

Top water level in metres above ordnance datum (mAOD)

Year construction was completed - This can be an estimate if the exact year is unknown

Water surface maximum area when reservoir is full in square metres (m²)

I don't know the information you are asking for, what do I do to find it out?

If you let us know about your reservoir, we can guide you to helpful links or places where you may get this information.

What is Ordnance Datum?

Ordnance Datum is a defined fixed level relating to average sea level at Newlyn, near Penzance, Cornwall. The level of the top of the dam and the top water level is normally measured in metres above Ordnance Datum (mAOD). To measure this, specialist surveying equipment is needed. If you do not already have this information, we are not expecting you to employ a surveyor to get it. However, if you do have this information available, please do provide it to us.

Do I have to do this?

There is currently no legal obligation to do this. However, every reservoir owner that takes part in this process ensures the regulation of reservoirs stays effective and robust in securing public safety.

Will I have to pay?

There are no costs associated with this process, and by taking part you have the choice to be kept up to date with latest information about any legislative changes relating to small raised reservoirs.

Will there be costs in the future?

Potentially there may be costs in the future for all reservoir owners, however this has not been decided yet.

There is a scheme for Arable or Horticultural businesses in England which has a round of funding open for applications now for capital grants for water management and irrigation, which includes building new reservoirs and restoration. The grants are open for Initial applications until 12th July.

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/farming-investment-fund>

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/water-management-grant-round-2>

Helpful Links

[Reservoirs: owner and operator requirements - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk)

[Reservoirs Act 1975 \(legislation.gov.uk\)](https://legislation.gov.uk)

[Written statements - Written questions, answers and statements - UK Parliament](https://www.parliament.uk)