

Reservoir safety – what do we mean?

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SYNOPSIS. In 1984 the then Institution of Water Engineers and Scientists held a two-day Symposium entitled Water Management – A Review of Current Issues. One of the topics covered was the imminent implementation of the Reservoirs Act 1975. That legislation has governed reservoir safety since 1985 - the change of Enforcement Authority from local authorities to the Environment Agency on 1 October 2004 did not change the fundamental tenets of the Act. When fully implemented, the provisions of the Floods and Water Act 2011 will introduce further changes. Again these changes do not change the fundamental principles and approach to reservoir safety that underlies the 1975 Act.

This paper will seek to restate and review the fundamental principles that have underlain reservoir safety legislation since the 1930 Act and explore the question of whether they remain “fit for purpose” in the 21st Century.