

## **Reservoir Safety - Planning for the Future**

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**SYNOPSIS.** The Water Act 2003 transferred responsibility for enforcing the Reservoirs Act 1975 to the Environment Agency in England and Wales. It also gave the Government the power to issue a Ministerial Direction to reservoir undertakers (i.e. owners) to produce reservoir flood plans (i.e. emergency action plans).

In his report on the summer 2007 floods, Sir Michael Pitt made a series of recommendations to improve response to flooding. He recommended that inundation maps for reservoirs should be available to the emergency services and the public in order to reduce risk and improve preparedness. He also recommended that there should be a move to a risk-based approach to dam safety as part of proposed legislative change.

Following the Pitt Review, the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra), the government department responsible for reservoir safety, instructed the Environment Agency to produce simplified inundation maps for all 2,092 large raised reservoirs regulated by the Reservoirs Act 1975. Local Resilience Forums (LRFs) and reservoir undertakers have now received these maps to help them produce emergency action plans. At the same time, Defra and the Cabinet Office have also developed and tested templates and guidance for both on-site and off-site plans.

This paper describes the process for producing inundation maps and their role, together with on- and off-site plans, in the overall emergency planning for reservoirs. It also briefly sets out proposals the Environment Agency is developing for the move to a risk-based approach to reservoir safety.