

OWNER'S DAM SAFETY PROGRAMS (ODSP)

Supportive Dam Safety Organizational Principles to Ensure Dam and Project Safety

1. Acknowledgement of Dam Safety Responsibility

- Recognition by all in owners organization that dam safety is first, foremost and appropriately the responsibility of the dam owner
- Recognition that the owner is the first line of defense against dam safety failures and incidents
- *In a non-supportive organization, the regulatory requirements are considered the dam safety program*

2. Communication

- In a dam safety supportive organizational culture, communication of a potential problem or concern with a project facility or with project operations is encouraged and supported at all levels of the organization.
- Likewise open communication with respect to the dam safety program (organizational structure or organizational response) is encouraged. Encouragement comes (for example) in the form of **policy statements**, **employee recognition** and (perhaps most important) **action being taken in response to the ideas or information communicated**.
- *In a non dam safety supportive organizational culture one or more organizational levels does not want to hear (or is understood not to want to hear) any bad news and thus notification of a potential problem is suppressed or lip service is given to passing on the information but no action is taken and soon it becomes well known that “ you might as well not say anything because nothing happens”.*

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3. Clear Designation of Responsibility

- In a dam safety supportive organizational culture the responsibility for the various aspects of dam safety are clearly spelled out. In addition the culture of the organization is such that the designation of responsibility is honored and recognized as authoritative in regard to ensuring safety (not regarded as being made in order to affix blame in the event of a problem)
- *In a non dam safety supportive organizational culture there is not a clear understanding of who is responsible for the various aspects of dam safety. There may be several entities with apparent responsibilities or there may be none. The organizational culture may also be oriented towards or have a history of denying of responsibility and affixing blame.*

4. Allocation of Resources to Dam Safety

- In a dam safety supportive organizational culture, the physical facilities (dam and appurtenant works) are recognized as (1) company assets and funds and employees are allocated to the job within the context of protecting the physical assets and the reputation and credibility of the company and, (2) presenting a potential hazard that duty of care requires avoidance of any safety problem.
- *In a non dam safety supportive organizational culture, funds to do any dam safety work are based on expending the minimum necessary to keep the project functional or staying within the letter of, but not in the spirit of, compliance (without respectful regard to dam safety).*

5. Learning Organization

- In a dam safety supportive organizational culture, substantive information which is of value (including lessons learned, potential problems or concerns) is shared within and outside the organization openly and with dispatch in order to receive as much knowledge and help as possible in solving the concern and to provide knowledge to others to help them avoid the same type of problem.
- *In a non dam safety supportive organizational culture, information is hoarded, potential problems or concerns are covered up, down played or disguised in order to bring as little attention or negative connotation to the issue as possible.*