

Canadian Dam Association (CDA) Consequence Classification Ratings for Dams

Consequence Classification	Population at Risk	Consequences of Failure		
		Loss of Life	Environmental and Cultural Values	Infrastructure and Economics
Low	None ¹	There is no possibility of loss of life other than through unforeseeable misadventure	Minimal short-term loss or deterioration and no long-term loss or deterioration of: a) Fisheries or wildlife habitats b) Rare or endangered species, or c) Unique landscapes or sites of cultural significance	Minimal economic losses mostly limited to the dam owner's property, with virtually no pre-existing potential for development within the dam inundation zone.
Significant	Temporary only ²	Low potential for multiple loss of life	No significant loss or deterioration of: a) Important fisheries or important wildlife habitats b) Rare or endangered species, or c) Unique landscapes or sites of cultural significance, and restoration or compensation in kind is highly possible	Low economic losses affecting limited infrastructure and residential buildings, public transportation or services or commercial facilities, or some destruction of or damage to locations used occasionally and irregularly for temporary purposes.
High	Permanent ³	10 or fewer	Significant loss or deterioration of: a) Important fisheries or wildlife habitats b) Rare or endangered species, or c) Unique landscapes or sites of cultural significance, and restoration or compensation in kind is highly possible	High economic losses affecting infrastructure, public transportation or services or commercial facilities, or some destruction of or some severe damage to scattered residential buildings.
Very high	Permanent ³	100 or fewer	Significant loss or deterioration of: a) Critical fisheries or wildlife habitats b) Rare or endangered species, or c) Unique landscapes or sites of cultural significance, and restoration or compensation in kind is possible but impractical	Very high economic losses affecting important infrastructure, public transportation or services or commercial facilities, or some destruction of or some severe damage to residential areas.
Extreme	Permanent ³	More than 100	Major loss or deterioration of: a) Critical fisheries or wildlife habitats b) Rare or endangered species, or c) Unique landscapes or sites of cultural significance, and restoration or compensation in kind is impossible	Extremely high economic losses affecting critical infrastructure, public transportation or services or commercial facilities, or some destruction of or some damage to residential areas.

¹ There is no identifiable population at risk.

² People are only occasionally and irregularly in the dam breach inundation zone, for example stopping temporarily, passing through on transportation routes or participating in recreational activities.

³ The population at risk is ordinarily or regularly located in the dam breach inundation zone, whether to live, work or recreate