

Think you know the dam rules?

A dummies guide to dam size and harvestable rights in NSW

Do you know the rules regarding dams and how big they can be?

The NSW state independent water regulator has found that in the Coffs area, most of the significant non-compliance with the rules is regarding dam size, licensing and use.

The Natural Resources Access Regulator (NRAR) is using new and more accurate technology to check dam size such as satellite imagery, surveying equipment and ultra-sonar devices. To make sure your dam is compliant, here's where to start.

There are two main types of dams – those that need a licence and those that don't.

You don't need a licence for your dam if it is built on a minor stream and you only capture 10 per cent or less of the average regional rainfall run-off in your area.

To calculate this, go to the **WaterNSW maximum harvestable right calculator** at: <https://tinyurl.com/yx3a2ujd>

The total capacity allowed of all dams on your property is called your 'maximum harvestable right dam capacity'. If you require a dam that is larger than your maximum harvestable right capacity, then you need to do two things:

- You need to obtain a water supply work approval for the dam structure
- You need a water access licence for the use of the water in the dam

Both of these are issued by WaterNSW.

Some exemptions apply – find out more from the WaterNSW fact sheet 'Do I need a licence?' at: <https://tinyurl.com/qnsafmz>

NRAR proactively monitors dam size. If your dam's capacity is larger than your maximum harvestable right, and it is not licensed, you will be required to reduce it and you will risk enforcement action being taken such as fines or directions.

But don't wait for an NRAR inspection to find out – get your dams measured by a professional surveyor to be certain your dams are below the limit.



The Natural Resources Access Regulator is responsible for monitoring compliance with NSW dam laws.