

## **PROCURING THE SERVICES OF A PROFESSIONAL ENGINEER**

One of the most important procedures for ensuring proper maintenance of the dam is procuring the services of a professional engineer. This document is designed to answer the most commonly asked questions about hiring an engineer and to provide a list of engineers who have requested to be placed on a list.

### **Why do I need an engineer?**

All dams will deteriorate with time. Periodic inspection, proper maintenance, and occasional repair and rehabilitation are inevitable. In addition, downstream development may have resulted in a change in the hazard classification and a need to upgrade the dam. An owner needs the expertise of an engineer to perform inspections or evaluate and undertake corrective measures at a dam.

An engineer can investigate the problem and recommend a course of action which may include the design of corrective measures and the preparation of construction plans and specifications, hydrologic and hydraulic analysis, breach analysis, and inundation mapping for emergency action plans. The engineer also can assist in selecting a contractor and can provide valuable construction inspection services.

Finally, §299.4 of 30 Texas Administrative Code Chapter 299, the Dam Safety Program rules, requires use of an engineer.

### **What type of engineer should I hire?**

It is essential to select someone with a Texas Professional Engineer license, who is competent in the field of dam safety. Important criteria to look for in a prospective engineer include the following:

- A professional engineer licensed in Texas;
- A knowledge of the Texas Dam Safety rules and regulations (30 Texas Administrative Code Chapter 299);
- Specific experience in the problem area; e.g., hydrology, hydraulics, structural, or geotechnical engineering; and
- An engineering company with an active Texas Board of Professional Engineers Firm Registration number. Check the [PE Board](#)<sup>1</sup> web site for verification.

### **How do I choose an engineer who is best for my needs?**

The best way to select an engineer is through a qualification based approach, which is the approach public entities must use based on rules of the Texas Board of Professional Engineers. This means that the knowledge, experience, and ingenuity of the engineer are the determining factors in making the selection. This strategy is advantageous when the owner is uncertain about the exact problem or the best solution to the problem.

When basing your selection on qualifications, several engineering firms submit their technical qualifications, experience with similar projects, reputation with existing clients, and other factors pertaining to the specific project. The owner then selects the most qualified firms to make brief presentations outlining a cost-effective and innovative approach to the problem. Based upon these presentations, the owner selects the most qualified engineer to develop a scope of work.

When agreement on the scope of work is achieved, the engineer and the owner negotiate a price that is fair and reasonable to both parties. If an agreement cannot be reached, negotiations start with the second ranked engineer. In this selection process, price is the main factor, but only after the most qualified engineer has been identified.

A private owner can also use a fee-based selection process, meaning that the engineer's fee is the only determining factor in making the selection. This process is advantageous when the owner knows exactly what is needed and can clearly define the scope of work before meeting with the engineer. However, the owner may not get the best option for the project and may select an engineer that is not qualified to do the work.

## **What does an owner need to do?**

An owner needs to:

- Request references from the engineer.
- Contact the references to discuss the engineer's performance.
- If possible, look at other projects completed under the engineer's design.
- Maintain an open line of communication with the Texas Dam Safety Program to verify that the rules will be met with the proposed work.
- Become knowledgeable in the basics of dam safety and the applicable rules.
- Carefully consider the selection of an engineer. A little extra work to ensure retaining the right engineer may save money in the future.
- Request options, if possible, for addressing the problem at the dam.

[TCEQ Dam Safety Program Web Site<sup>2</sup>](#)

## **Dam Engineers that have requested to be listed**

The following is an alphabetical list of engineers that have requested to be placed on the list. The TCEQ does not **pre-certify, recommend, or endorse** any of the following engineers. An owner is not obligated to hire an engineer on this list. Any licensed Texas professional engineer experienced and familiar with dam construction and design and TCEQ rules can be used.

The following list is in alphabetical order by engineering firm:

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<sup>1</sup> <http://www.tbpe.state.tx.us>

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.tceq.texas.gov/field/damsafetyprog.html>