

Dam Safety 2016 Inspection & Audit Results

In 2016, the AER conducted 44 inspections of fluid-containment structures (e.g., tailings ponds and dams), and three audits. Inspections are done to ensure that these structures are designed, constructed, operated, maintained and decommissioned safely, and that owners and the AER are prepared to respond in the event of an emergency.

When a noncompliance is discovered, the AER issues a notice to the owner. The owner takes action to resolve the noncompliance, and the AER is notified.

In 2016, three noncompliances, none of which posed serious dam safety risks, were found at oil sands mine sites. Notices of noncompliances were sent to the mine owners, and the noncompliances were resolved.

Inspections

Sector	Notices issued	Satisfactory	Total
Oil sands projects	3	29	32
Coal mining	0	6	6
Oil and gas operations	0	8	8
Total	3	43	46

Audits

Audit category	Very good	Good	Fair	Poor	Very poor	Total
Oil sands projects	2	1	0	0	0	3
Coal mining	0	0	0	0	0	0
Oil and gas operations	0	0	0	0	0	0
Total	2	1	0	0	0	3

Understanding audit categories

Very good – The dam owner's dam safety management system (DSMS) is fully documented and implemented. No action is required.

Good – The dam owner's DSMS is largely documented and largely implemented. Minor action is required to fully document and implement.

Fair – The dam owner's DSMS has gaps in documentation and implementation. Action is required to fully document and implement.

Poor – The dam owner's DSMS is poorly documented and poorly implemented. Significant action is required without delay to fully document and implement.

Very poor – The dam owner's DSMS does not exist or is nonfunctioning. Major action is required without delay to document and implement.