



Farm dams - what size dam can you build without a licence?

Calculating the size of your dams

To work out the size of a farm dam, or dams that you can build without a licence, you must calculate the **Maximum Harvestable Right Dam Capacity** or **MHRDC** for your property. You must calculate your MHRDC if you wish to:

1 irrigate from an existing farm dam

If your existing dams are within your MHRDC and are constructed on a minor stream or hillside, you can use your dams for any purpose without further approval. If not, a licence or approval will be required if you want to irrigate.

2 construct a new farm dam

The MHRDC calculation will tell you the maximum size of a dam you can build without a licence (provided the dam is constructed on a minor stream or hillside).

3 sell part of your property

Since the MHRDC is directly related to the size of your property, when you subdivide or sell part of your property, your MHRDC is reduced proportionally. For example, if you sell half of your property, your MHRDC is also halved.

If your property is to be subdivided, then some of the resultant properties may have dams that are greater than the MHRDC. You will need to modify the dams or apply for a licence. There is no guarantee that the licence would be issued. Consult with your local DWE office before finalising your plans for subdividing or selling part of your property.

Calculating the MHRDC

To calculate your MHRDC you multiply the number of hectares of your property by the factor shown for the locality of your property on the MHRDC multiplier map.

To make the calculation, follow these three steps.

Step 1 - Area of Property

Determine the area of your property in hectares. This is normally found on your council rate notice.

Note: 1 hectare = 2.47 acres
or 1 acre = 0.4047 hectares

Definition of 'Property'

A 'property' is defined as a parcel of land valued as one unit by the Valuer General's Department (under the *Land Valuation Act 1916*). A 'property' will generally appear on a single rate notice from your local council.

The Department of Water and Energy (DWE) has the discretion to treat multiple parcels of land as one property for the purposes of calculating your MHRDC. Where you receive more than one rate notice because your land holding crosses local government boundaries the land holdings may be treated as one property. However, if you receive multiple rate notices because your holding is made up of land in separated parcels, it is unlikely DWE will consider the land holdings as a single property for the purposes of calculating MHRDC.

Step 2 - Multiplier factor from maps

Locate your property on the map that shows the Maximum Harvestable Right Dam Capacity multiplier.

It is easy to do this is on-line at
www.farmdamscalculator.dnr.nsw.gov.au/cgi-bin/ws_postcode.epl

If you do not have internet access check the maps at your local office of the Department of Water and Energy.

Determine the multiplier value of the line closest to your property.

When the property is located between multiplier lines, estimate the value between the two lines. For example, if your property is located at Merriwa (Map 4) midway between the 0.06 megalitres per hectare and 0.07 megalitres per hectare lines, the multiplier value would be 0.065 megalitres per hectare.

Step 3 - Finding the MHRDC

Multiply the area of your property by the multiplier from the map. The answer gives you the MHRDC for your property measured in megalitres.

This can also be done on-line at
www.farmdamscalculator.dnr.nsw.gov.au/cgi-bin/ws_postcode.epl

Departmental staff are available to assist you if you have problems in calculating the MHRDC for your property and will also help you check the relevant topographic map for a suitable location for your dam.

Example: Terry owns a 60 hectare property near Kangaroo Valley NSW. Terry would like to build two farm dams using his harvestable right.

Terry calculates his **Maximum Harvestable Rights Dam Capacity** (MHRDC) by finding the MHRDC Multiplier from the map and multiplying it by his property area (in hectares).

MHRDC Multiplier	=	0.13 ML/ha
Property area	=	60 ha
MHRDC	=	0.13 ML/ha x 60 ha
	=	7.8 ML

Terry can build dams with a combined volume of 7.8 ML or less, using his harvestable right.

Where do I get more information?

Contact the water licensing officer at your local Department of Water and Energy office

26 Honeysuckle Drive
Newcastle West

t (02) 4904 2500

e information@dwe.nsw.gov.au

Note: This information does not constitute legal advice.

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