

Risk Analysis Research Program

1980s

In the mid-1970s, two dam collapses within two years shook public confidence in the safety of dams nationwide. In response, the Corps began a large-scale dam inspection program that included non-Federal installations. The Office of the Assistant Secretary for the Army, Civil Works, requested that the Corps implement a risk analysis approach to the inspections, and IWR was called upon to adapt risk analysis procedures to dam safety.



IWR began the Risk Analysis Research Program in 1984. It was managed by Dr. Eugene Stakhiv of the IWR Policy Division and Dr. David Moser of the Research Division. The study produced a series of rules and regulations on flood frequency analysis, reliability analysis and risk analysis pertaining to dam safety. These findings were published as engineering manuals for Corps field personnel. The program, which ended in 1990, was one of the first instances where IWR research directly influenced engineering practices.

The study of risk analysis procedures didn't end with the Risk Analysis Research Program. This methodology has been applied to many areas of Corps planning into the 21st century, including navigation, hydrologic and environmental fields.



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