

# Inspection of flood and coastal risk management assets



## The Environment Agency's approach to visual condition assessment

**Information on the condition of flood & coastal risk management assets underpins our approach to asset management.**

**The Environment Agency use asset data to target resources to areas at highest risk and provide evidence behind our funding bids to Defra.**

**To ensure consistency, we deliver accredited inspector training and have a national methodology for inspections and recording data.**

### Managing a risk-based programme

We regularly inspect all assets that contribute to reducing flood risk on main rivers and sections of the coast that are subject to sea flooding, regardless of who owns the asset.

The frequency of our inspections is risk based and range from 6 monthly in the highest risk areas to 5 yearly in low risk rural areas.

Assets are grouped into 'Inspection Units' with all assets in an inspection unit inspected at the same frequency.

### Condition Assessment Manual

Our asset inspectors use the Condition Assessment Manual to assess each part of the asset to give an overall condition grade. The manual provides photographic examples of each asset type in each condition grade, along with a list of 'performance features' to look out for.



*(Example of Condition Assessment Manual Pages)*

### Setting a 'target condition' for assets

Our condition grading system ranges from 1 to 5, where 1 is Very Good condition, and 5 is Very Poor. Each asset is given a target condition grade, based on several factors such as the asset type, and what it is protecting. Recent R&D and evidence from flood events have shown that in most cases, a target condition of 3 (Fair) is appropriate. We compare the actual condition recorded by our inspectors to the given target condition in order to identify where further assessment or remedial works are required.

### Asset inspection accreditation

The National Audit Office has commended our independently run asset inspector accreditation course, known as T98. The course involves e-learning and an assessment package to explain how to assign appropriate visual condition grades and use the Asset Information Management System (AIMS) to store the data. This is followed by a period of supervised inspections and a final site assessment.

An increasing number of Local Authorities have successfully completed the accreditation process. For those who want to gain a basic understanding of the asset inspection grading process, the e-learning package is freely available on the Capacity building website (click [here](#)).

### Data capture & storage

The majority of our inspectors use ruggedised laptops to capture the visual condition information whilst on site.

This saves time and avoids double handling of data.

The data recorded includes photographs of the assets and recommendations for any remedial work that the inspectors identify.

AIMS is available to all Risk Management Authorities, and there is e-learning material available on the capacity building website. (click [here](#)).



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