

Beavers in Tewksbury

The Health Department and Conservation Office receive requests to investigate beaver related issues such as, flooding and property damage. As the beaver population increased, residential and commercial developments were built, adverse impacts from beaver damming activity increased. It is critical that people know how to live with beavers in the environment.

Often, the problem is limited to “nuisance flooding” of private yards. While it is inconvenient and may actually impair a person from enjoying full use of the property, in most cases public health and safety is not threatened. Also, the creation of new breeding habitat for mosquitoes does not constitute a public health threat under this law. According to 310 CMR 80A the following constitute as an emergency:

1. Beaver occupancy of a public water supply.
2. Flooding of drinking water facilities including wells.
3. Flooding of sewage and septic systems.
4. Flooding of a public or private road way including driveway and railways.
5. Flooding of public utility facilities.
6. Flooding of medical and public safety facilities.
7. Flooding of hazardous waste sites or facilities.
8. The gnawing, chewing, or other damage to public utility facilities.
9. Flooding that is an imminent threat of substantial property damage or income loss where the flooding will hurt the structural integrity of a building, damage an agricultural crop, or where the Board of Health determines a public health threat exists.

If there is a true emergency, the homeowner or property owner should contact the Tewksbury Health Department to apply for a permit to breach a dam, install a flow pipe through a dam, or to trap and/or use outlawed traps out of the normal trapping season. The Health Department does not exercise the permit, does not seek permission of the owner of the property on which the dam sits, and is not obligated to find the source of the backup. Initial permits are valid for 10 days, and may be renewed only up to a total of 30 days. During the second two periods, the applicant must contact the Massachusetts Division of Fisheries and Wildlife for a permanent plan of action.

The Commission’s role involves the issuance of an Emergency Order of Conditions once the Health Department approves a permit to breach the dam. Due to the potential for damage downstream when the dam is breached, the Commission holds the responsibility of ensuring that the solution for flooding problems for one home owner do not result in the transference of those problems to other home owners.

Please understand: The Tewksbury Health Department and Conservation Commission cannot compel anyone to address beaver-related flooding (emergency or not), and cannot design a project to address this flooding; they neither have the authority nor the expertise for these tasks. They can only respond to a request for specific work, via filing an application for a permit to breach, trap or install a device.

List of companies to assist with Beaver Problems:

- Beaver Solutions – Mike Callahan – 413-527-6472 – info@beaversolutions.com
- Patrick Mustoe, Trapper – 781-354-4453
- Kurt Kefferstan, Trapper – 978-815-3132
- Leo Martin, Trapper – 978-256-9108

Government contacts:

Tewksbury Health Department: 978-640-4470
Conservation Commission: 978-640-4370
MA Division of Fisheries & Wildlife: 978-263-4347

