



Vermont Emergency Management
Vermont Department of Public Safety
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STATE OF VERMONT: HYDROLOGIC AND HYDRAULIC (H&H) STUDY GUIDE

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DEFINITION

A Hydrologic and Hydraulic (H&H) Study is the study of movement of water, including the volume and rate of flow as it moves through a watershed, basin, channel, or man-made structure.

PURPOSE

This Study Guide outlines State of Vermont and FEMA guidance regarding the contents of a Hydrologic and Hydraulic (H&H) Study and when it is necessary for FEMA PA Projects within Disaster DR4720. It is a summary and *does not* supersede official guidance from the State of Vermont or FEMA PAPPG v. 4. If an applicant is unsure as to whether an H&H Study is required, they should reach out to their State-assigned Public Assistance Coordinator (PAC).

WHEN AN H&H STUDY IS REQUIRED

- An H&H Study is required when a ***town highway structure*** conveys a perennial stream. While recommended, an H&H Study is not required for crossings that are not part of the transportation network.
 - Bridge and culvert work on perennial stream crossings must conform with the Vermont statewide DEC Stream Alteration Standard.¹
- In the State of Vermont, H&H studies must be conducted by VTrans ***or consultants for H&H Studies, adhering to VTrans hydraulics standards*** outlined in the 2015 VTrans Hydraulics Manual.²

WHEN AN H&H STUDY IS NOT REQUIRED

- An H&H study is *not* required if the structure carries an intermittent stream.
 - Culvert sizing for crossings on intermittent streams are determined by adopted local transportation Codes and Standards. ***The culvert size should meet or exceed the Active Channel Width***, as indicated in the Vermont Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC) Municipal Roads General Permit (MRGP).³

¹ *Environmental Protection Rule* (Chapter 27), "Vermont Stream Alteration Rule," Agency of Natural Resources, Department of Environmental Conservation, Watershed Management Division, River Management Program, March 10, 2017.

² *Hydraulics Manual*, Vermont Agency of Transportation, May 28, 2015.

³ *General Permit 3-9040*, "For Stormwater Discharges from Municipal Roads," Appendix C, Agency of Natural Resources, Department of Environmental Conservation, January 26, 2023.

- The Vermont Stream Alteration Rule *does not apply* to intermittent streams.⁴
- An H&H study is *not* required for Stream Alteration Permits.
 - State of Vermont culvert sizing criteria already include geomorphic sizing standards which are established and checked by engineers.
- A post-disaster H&H study is *not* required when a structure has already been repaired in accordance with Codes and Standards.

CONTENTS OF AN H&H STUDY⁵

When an H&H Study is required, the following elements are generally included. This list is not exhaustive and does not supersede official guidance.

- Identification of upstream and downstream impacts (e.g. stage, velocity, duration) of alterations to the floodplain, including change to the extent or depth of the Special Flood Hazard Area (SFHA) or changes to the Base Flood Elevation (BFE).
- General site description, including location, latitude and longitude, drainage basin, FIRM, regulatory mapped flood zone (if applicable).
- Existing condition: pipe shape, material, length, inlet and outlet conditions, performance level.
- Proposed condition: pipe shape, size, material, length, inlet and outlet conditions, performance level.
- Will the proposed condition satisfy the local floodplain ordinance and local and state storm water management requirements?
- Review by a professional engineer in the State of Vermont to ensure compliance with 44 CFR 60.3.

H&H STUDY RESULTS

The analysis resulting from an H&H Study will determine **requirements** for structure size and fish passage. In addition, it may provide **recommendations** for structure type, based on site constraints, provided the structure meets Vermont Codes and Standards for **width, depth, embedment, fish passage and hydraulic capacity**.

STRUCTURE REPLACEMENT GUIDE (DISASTER RESPONSE)

This Structure Replacement Guide from the Vermont Agency of Transportation (Figure 1) illustrates State of Vermont requirements for structures impacted during a storm event.

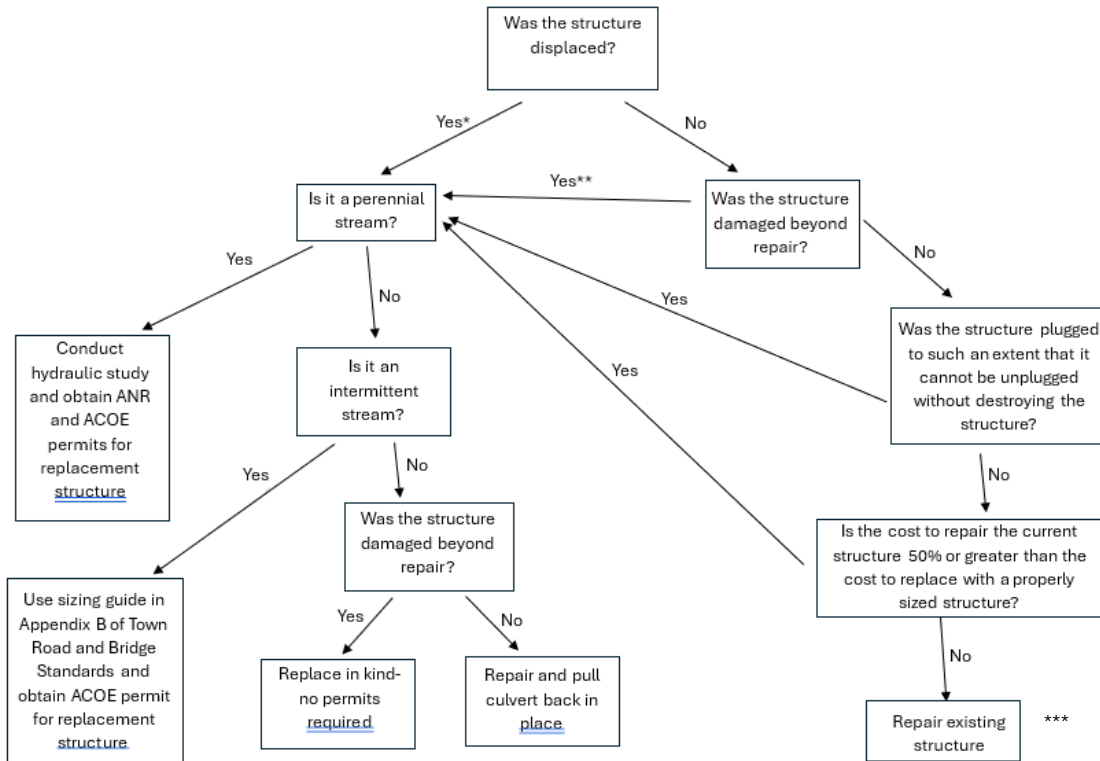
Note that “damaged beyond repair” means it is “not feasible to repair the existing damaged structure.”⁶ This includes instances when a culvert, pipe, and/or supporting fill need to be newly assembled, including when a culvert pipe plugged with debris cannot be unplugged. **A replacement culvert pipe must meet State of Vermont Codes and Standards for size.**

⁴ *Environmental Protection Rule* (Chapter 27), “Vermont Stream Alteration Rule.”

⁵ DHS FEMA Region 4 Policy Memo, “Hydrologic & Hydraulic (H&H) Study Quick Guide,” V3.0, October 2017.

⁶ *Environmental Protection Rule* (Chapter 27), “Vermont Stream Alteration Rule,” (G.11.b).

Structure Replacement Guide (Disaster Response)



* In an emergency, the structure can be dragged back in place as a **temporary** repair

In an emergency, a structure that is at least as large as the damaged structure can be installed as a **temporary repair

*** To local transportation Codes & Standards as outlined in [The Orange Book Section 7-5](#)

Figure 1

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

The following resources represent official policy guidance from the State of Vermont and FEMA.

Issuing Agency	Policy	H&H Study-Related Guidance
Agency of Natural Resources, DEC	Vermont Stream Alteration Rule <i>Environmental Protection Rule, Chapter 27</i>	Subchapter 4 - Investigation; Standards for Issuance of Stream Alteration Permits (9)
Agency of Natural Resources, DEC	Municipal Roads General Permit Permit 3-9040 , <i>“For Stormwater Discharges from Municipal Roads”</i>	Intermittent Stream Crossing Specification (Appendix C, iii to iv)
Vermont Agency of Transportation	Hydraulics Manual	Chapter 3; Data Collection, Resources and Tools (3-1 to 3-10) Chapter 4; Hydrology (4-1 to 4-36)
Vermont Agency of Transportation	Town Road and Bridge Standards <i>The Orange Book, Part 7</i>	Town Road and Bridge Standards FAQ (7-3 to 7-4)
FEMA	Grant Programs Directorate Environmental Planning and Historic Preservation <i>Poli #108-023-1, Revision 2</i>	EHP Review Process (1 to 3)