



DAM FAILURE

Dam failures and levee breaches can occur quickly and without warning, causing severe flash flooding in the surrounding area and resulting in property damage and loss of life.

Causes

- Severe storms, including thunderstorms and hurricanes
- Accumulation of melted snow
- Jams caused by debris
- Landslides
- Fire
- Volcanic eruptions
- Civil disturbance or terrorism

Areas at Risk

- Determine whether your home or work place is downstream from a dam and whether you are within a predetermined evacuation zone.
- The potential hazard risks of dams are designated by the following criteria:
 - **High Hazard**—Dam failure would probably result in loss of life and major damage to property.
 - **Significant Hazard**—Dam failure could possibly cause some loss of life and property damage.
 - **Low Hazard**—Dam failure is unlikely to cause loss of life or property damage.

How to Prepare

- Ensure that your family has an evacuation procedure and communication plan.
- Build an emergency kit that includes essential items for the entire family.

What to Do If a Dam Fails

- Keep informed about the situation by monitoring radio or TV.
- If you are ordered to evacuate:
 - Take only essential items.
 - Turn off gas, electricity, and water.
 - Disconnect appliances.
 - Make sure your car's gas tank is full.
 - Do not walk in moving water.
 - Do not drive in flood water. As little as six inches of water can cause loss of control and stalling of a vehicle.
 - Follow the designated evacuation procedure, and expect a high volume of traffic.
- If you are NOT ordered to evacuate:
 - Stay tuned to an emergency station on radio or TV.
 - Listen for further instructions.
 - Prepare to evacuate to a shelter or neighbor's home if your home is damaged.

All personnel should maintain a basic level of preparedness for all potential hazards.

You are encouraged to be informed about what might happen, make a family emergency plan, and build an emergency supply kit.

What to Do after a Dam Failure

- Listen to news reports to make sure water supplies are not contaminated.
- Stay clear of flood waters (standing and moving) as they may be contaminated or deeper than expected.
- Beware of downed power lines.
- Avoid any roads where flood waters have receded, as they may have weakened and could collapse under the weight of a car.
- Be extremely cautious when entering buildings and homes, as there may be unseen damage.
- Clean and disinfect everything that was touched by water, as it can contain sewage and other contaminants.

Where to Find Additional Information

- Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) Ready.gov—
 - <http://www.fema.gov/protecting-our-communities/plan-ahead-dam-failure>
 - <http://www.fema.gov/national-flood-insurance-program>
 - <http://www.ready.gov/floods>
- Association of State Dam Safety Officials (ASDSO)—<http://www.damsafety.org/>
- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC)—www.bt.cdc.gov/disasters/floods/readiness.asp

Semper Paratus

Be “Always Ready.” Be informed about what might happen, make an emergency plan with your family, and build an emergency supply kit good for at least three days.