



# Dam Failure

**Dam failures or levee breaches can occur quickly and without much 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
- Volcanic eruptions
- Fire
- Civil disturbance

## 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 risk of a dam is 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

- 1 **Stay informed.** ALL Marines (active duty and Reserve), civil service, and contractor personnel with a NIPR computer account—verify and update official contact information populated in the **Marine Corps Enterprise Mass Notification System (eMNS)** by information found in the Global Address List (GAL), and self-register all cell phones, home phone, email addresses, etc. in eMNS. Registration of personal information enhances Marine Corps Installations' ability to rapidly provide emergency information and changes to the base's operating status during non-working hours and wherever you are.
- 2 Stay informed also by monitoring radio and TV alerts.
- 3 Make a **written family evacuation plan**.
- 4 Make a **written emergency communication plan**, in case family members are separated.
- 5 Obtain flood insurance—There is typically a 30-day waiting period from date of purchase before a new flood policy goes into effect.
- 6 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, TV, and eMNS alerts.
- If you are ordered to evacuate:
  - » Take only essential items, including your family emergency kit.
  - » Turn off gas, electricity, and water.
  - » Disconnect appliances.
  - » Make sure your car's gas tank is full.
  - » **Turn Around, Don't Drown**
    - » 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 plan, and expect a high volume of traffic.
- If you are NOT ordered to evacuate:
  - » Stay tuned to an emergency station on radio or TV and eMNS alerts.
  - » Listen for further instructions.
  - » Prepare to evacuate to a shelter or neighbor's home if your home is damaged.
- Once you are in a safe place, follow your command's protocols for personnel accountability and contact your command's designated Point of Contact to check-in and report your location and situation.

**Set your own course through any hazard: stay informed, make a plan, build a kit. Live Ready Marine Corps.**



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## 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.
- After a declared emergency and if needed, the installation Commanding Officer will direct an Emergency Family Assistance Center (EFAC) be stood up in a safe area. The EFAC is a supportive environment for families to come for assistance with on-site emergency or referral services, including: possible information on missing or unaccounted for loved ones; displaced family housing referrals; coordination of donated goods and services; support of evacuations and sheltering; and other human services. Know what to expect—ask your installation emergency manager for local EFAC procedures and resources.

## Where to Find Additional Information

- FEMA—<http://www.fema.gov/damfailure/dam-failure-information>
- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC)—[www.bt.cdc.gov/disasters/floods/readiness.asp](http://www.bt.cdc.gov/disasters/floods/readiness.asp)
- Department of Homeland Security (Ready.gov)—[www.ready.gov/floods](http://www.ready.gov/floods)

