



# 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 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 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

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

## 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, and disconnect appliances.
  - Make sure your car's gas tank is full.
  - Do not walk in moving water or drive in flood water. As little as 6" 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.
- Once you are in a safe place, report to your command if you are military or government civilian personnel or a member of the selective reserves.



ARMY STRONG™

---

### **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)—
  - <https://www.fema.gov/why-dams-fail>
  - <https://www.ready.gov/floods>
- U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) National Inventory of Dams—  
<https://nid.usace.army.mil>
- Association of State Dam Safety Officials—<http://www.damsafety.org/>
- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC)—  
<http://emergency.cdc.gov/disasters/floods/>
- American Red Cross—<http://www.redcross.org/get-help/prepare-for-emergencies/types-of-emergencies/flood>
- Ready Army—[www.ready.army.mil](http://www.ready.army.mil)

**It's up to you. Prepare strong. Get an emergency supply kit with enough supplies for at least three days, make an emergency plan with your family and be informed about what might happen.**

