

**IMPORTANT ADVICE FOR
DAM SAFETY THAT COULD
SAVE YOUR LIFE**

A **LWAYS** heed and obey dam
warning signs

ALWAYS stay outside buoy lines
and away from restricted areas
near dams

ALWAYS wear a Personal Flotation
Device (PFD) when near water

ALWAYS be alert for flashing lights,
sirens, and rising water levels

ALWAYS understand and respect
the danger zones near dams

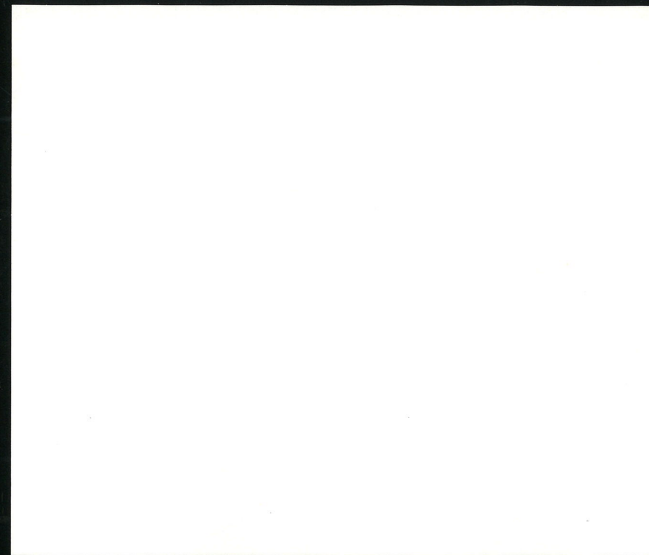
ALWAYS have an escape route
planned

NEVER swim near a dam

NEVER boat or fish alone when
near a dam

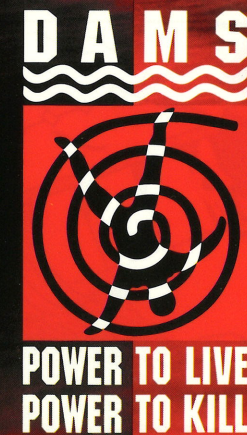
The Hydro Users Group, known as HUG, is an association of dam owners, hydroelectric plant operators and affiliated interests whose purpose is to promote safe, efficient and economical production of hydropower through increased knowledge and cooperation of its members. HUG membership represents some 55 companies and agencies.

HUG is sponsoring this public awareness program with state and federal agencies to promote safe water-based recreation near dams.



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FATAL ATTRACTION



I was checking fishermen for permits near a dam in Wisconsin. Two young men were wading dangerously close to the discharge area below the dam. I warned them of the hazards posed by changing water flow and strong currents. Despite my warnings and the posted DANGER signs, they refused to leave. Other people said they'd also warned them and got the same response.

Suddenly, one of the men was pulled under by the current. The other tried to help, but was also quickly pulled in. I ran to get a rope, climbed the security fence and attempted rescue from the shore. A bystander, risking his own life, jumped into the river to help. He got one man into my reach and went back for the other. I was able to pull the second fisherman and the rescuer to safety as exhaustion was about to overcome them.

The bystander nearly lost his life trying to help, but fortunately everyone survived.

Warden
Department of Natural Resources

1 IGNORANCE AND POOR JUDGEMENT CAN KILL YOU

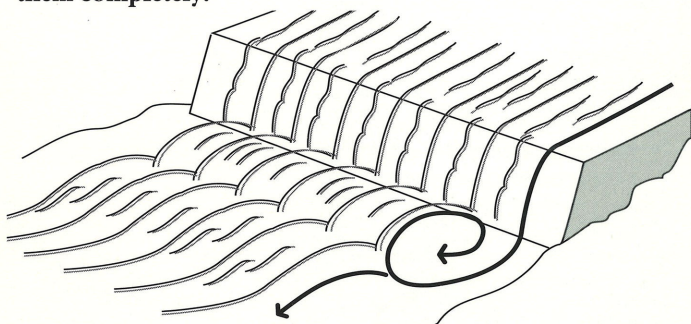
Every year, hundreds of people are killed or seriously injured at dams. Most of these accidents could be avoided by simply staying clear of the restricted zones at dams, by understanding the dangers dams create and by obeying all warning devices.

2 DAMS - KNOW THE DANGERS

Low Head Dams

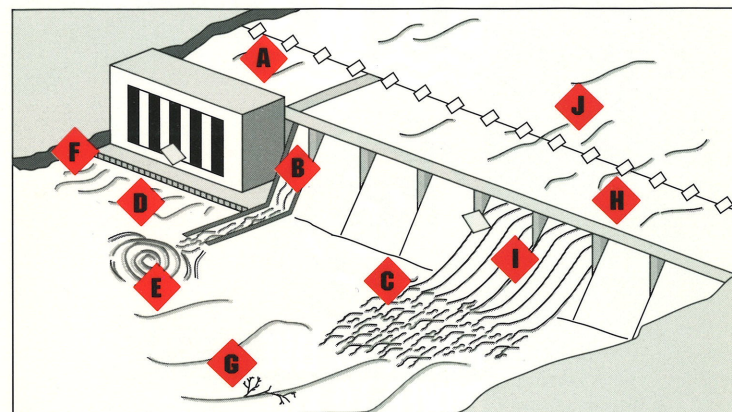
These simple, wall-like dams extend completely across a river. They are used to keep a constant water level above the dam. Low Head Dams often look harmless, but in fact, they are EXTREMELY dangerous. Many people have made the fatal mistake of underestimating the powerful undercurrents these dams create.

Water going over a Low Head Dam creates a strong recirculating current, or backroller, at the base of the dam. Even on small rivers, the force of the backroller current can easily trap a person or boat. Low Head Dams are killers. Stay away from them completely.



Hydroelectric & Reservoir Dams

Hydroelectric Dams generate electricity. Reservoir Dams regulate river flow. These structures may have many of the features shown in the diagram to the right. Water flow is controlled by gates and generators; often these operations are controlled from remote locations. Currents and water levels near dams can change very rapidly and without warning. An area that might seem safe one minute can be lethal the next.



- A** Hazardous areas marked by buoy lines
- B** Sudden water discharge from dam gates
- C** Strong, unpredictable currents above and below dams
- D** Sudden turbulent discharges from automatically operated power house generators
- E** Deceiving *reverse* currents below spillways
- F** Slippery surfaces on dam structures and shorelines
- G** Submerged hazards above and below dams
- H** Open spillways which may not be visible from above the dam
- I** Debris passing over or through the dam
- J** Ice that forms near a dam is often thin and unsafe

DAM

3 OBEY ALL WARNING SIGNS AND SIGNALS

Be alert for the warning signs of rising water:

- Flashing lights, horns or sirens
- Increased or changed wildlife activity
- Louder sound of rushing water
- Previously exposed rocks or snags are covered by water
- Clear water quickly becomes cloudy
- Suddenly faster water currents



4 DON'T TAKE CHANCES WHEN BOATING OR CANOEING

- Boating above or below a dam can be very dangerous. Always maintain a safe distance from the dam. Keep your motor running when near a dam so that you are always ready to maneuver or to leave the area quickly.
- Stay away from spillways. Changing currents and unpredictable waves make boat control difficult.
- Never anchor a boat below a dam. Rapid surges in water levels can *pull* an anchored boat under water in seconds.
- Beware of dangerous and unseen currents. Backrollers, eddys and whirlpools can pull a boat upstream into a spillway and quickly capsize it.



5 USE EXTREME CAUTION WHEN WADING OR WALKING NEAR WATER

- Always wear a personal flotation device (PFD, life jacket) when near a dam.
- Be aware that water temperatures may be colder than expected. An accidental fall into the water could cause thermal shock, unconsciousness or hypothermia.
- Always have a safe escape route planned when near a dam. Be prepared to evacuate at the first sign of danger.

6 IF YOU GET SWEEPED OFF YOUR FEET IN THE WATER...

- Stay calm. Do not try to stand up. Drop anything that can weigh you down. Lie flat on your back.
- Do not let your feet hang down in the water. Your foot can get snagged on the bottom and the current can force you underwater. Keep your feet up and pointed in the direction you are floating. Use your feet to cushion impacts with rocks or obstructions.
- Go with the flow. Do not try to swim against the current. Move diagonally across the current to the nearest shore.
- Waders generally trap air inside and may not cause you to sink unless you try to stand up. When you reach the shore, roll on to dry land to drain the water from your waders. Do not try to stand until the water is out of your waders.
- If you get trapped on an island, stay there. Wait for the water to recede or signal for help.

