

# Recreation and hydropower



Portland General Electric (PGE) operates a series of recreation sites adjacent to our hydroelectric projects on the Willamette, Clackamas and Deschutes Rivers. Our dams, reservoirs and powerhouses generate clean energy, as well as provide excellent places for fishing, boating, paddling, hiking, picnicking, camping and more. However, recreation near dams presents potential risks.

Water flows through our dams in a variety of ways, including over spillways and through turbines, and these auto-operated structures can release water suddenly — creating swift, turbulent conditions in seconds. Because of this, it is important to understand the hazards and safety measures for recreating near hydroelectric projects.

## Know your risks

When you recreate at one of PGE's parks, please be aware of these hazards:



1. Hazard areas marked by buoy lines
2. Submerged hazards above and below dams
3. Strong and fast currents above and below dams
4. Spillways that are difficult to see from the water
5. Sudden, turbulent discharge from auto-operated powerhouse generators
6. Sudden, swift water discharge from spillway gates
7. Debris passing through or over dams
8. Powerful reverse currents below dams
9. Slippery surfaces on dam structures, ledges and shorelines

## Be alert: signs of rising water

Conditions around dams and hydroelectric developments can change from calm and safe to turbulent and hazardous in the blink of an eye. Stay alert and watch and listen for:

- **Buoys:** Restrict access to dangerous areas
- **Signs:** Warn of dangers in spillway areas
- **Sirens:** Indicate there is an emergency and large volumes of water will be released
- **Sounds:** Sound of rushing water increases as water is released
- **Water color:** Clear water becomes cloudy as water flow increases
- **Changing surroundings:** Exposed rocks, logs or shoreline become covered as water levels rise

# PGE parks and recreation sites

## Staying safe around dams

### Boating/paddling

- Stay at a safe distance when above or below a dam — currents and surges can pull and capsize a boat
- Remain alert and be prepared to evacuate immediately — conditions can change rapidly
- Never boat in restricted areas and obey all warning signs
- Never anchor below a dam — surges can pull a boat under water
- Never boat alone

### Fishing/wading/swimming

- Always wear a Personal Flotation Device near dams
- Be aware that water temperatures may be colder than expected — submersion could cause hypothermia
- Watch for signs of rising water — plan your escape route before nearing water
- Never fish, wade, or swim alone

### If you get swept off your feet

- Stay calm and do not try to stand up; drop anything that can weigh you down
- Lie on your back and keep your feet up, pointed downstream; use your feet to push off obstacles
- Never swim against the current; backstroke diagonally across it, letting the current naturally take you to shore
- Roll onto land to drain boots and waders — do not stand with water in your waders
- If trapped on an island, signal for help — do not risk crossing the river

**More information**

**PGE Parks and Recreation**  
PortlandGeneral.com/Parks  
pgeparks@pgn.com  
503-464-8515

**Oregon State Marine Board**  
BoatOregon.com  
503-378-8587

**Emergency – Call 911**

**Clackamas County Marine Patrol** (non-emergency)  
503-655-8211

**Jefferson County Marine Patrol** (non-emergency)  
541-475-6520