



FEMA



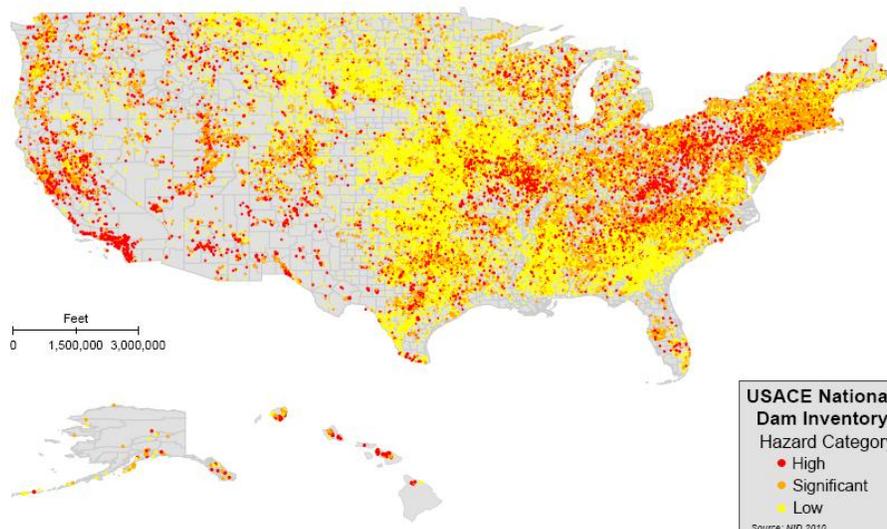
## Be Aware of Potential Risk of Dam Failure in Your Community

Approximately 14,000 dams in the United States are classified as high-hazard potential (HHP), meaning that their failure could result in loss of life. Dams can fail for a number of reasons, including overtopping caused by floods, acts of sabotage, or structural failure of materials used in dam construction. The worst dam failure in the United States occurred in 1889 in Johnstown, Pennsylvania. Over 2,200 died, with many more left homeless. Dams present risks but they also provide many benefits, including irrigation, flood control, and recreation. Dams have been identified as a key resource of our national infrastructure that is vulnerable to terrorist attack.

States have the primary responsibility for protecting their populations from dam failure. Of the approximately 84,000 dams in the United States, State governments regulate about 90 percent. About 27,000 dams throughout our Nation could incur damage or fail, resulting in significant property damage, lifeline disruption (utilities), business disruption, displacement of families from their homes, and environmental damage.

The most important steps you can take to protect yourself from dam failure are to know your risk. Contact government offices to learn if an Emergency Action Plan (EAP) is in place and to evacuate when directed by emergency response officials. An EAP is a formal document that identifies potential emergency conditions at a dam and specifies preplanned actions to be followed by the dam owner to reduce property damage and loss of life. The plan may save lives and property damage through timely evacuations of those who live, work, or enjoy recreation near a high-hazard potential dam.

### Dams Across the United States



### Get Involved to Make Your Community Safe

- Make sure you know your risk
- Determine who owns or regulates the dam
- Ensure that an EAP is in place for the dam, and
- Know your evacuation route to get out of harm's way.

To find out if an EAP is in place, contact your State or emergency management agency, or visit the National Inventory of Dams website: <http://nid.usace.army.mil>. Guidelines for developing EAPs and other dam safety resources are at: [www.fema.gov/plan/prevent/damfailure/publications.shtm](http://www.fema.gov/plan/prevent/damfailure/publications.shtm)

### **Actions taken now will save lives and property**

There are many steps you can take, from purchasing flood insurance, to developing an evacuation plan, to flood-proofing your home, to reporting any problems that you see. The sooner you act, the better off you will be when the next flood occurs. Be prepared.

### **No dam is flood-proof**

Dams reduce the risk of flooding. No dam structure can eliminate all flood risk. A dam is generally designed to retain water. If a larger flood occurs, floodwaters might flow over the dam. Flooding can occur if a dam fails. Alternatively, a dam operator may release excess water downstream to relieve pressure from the dam. That action could cause flooding, too. That is why it is so important to know how close you live to a dam.

### **Protect Yourself with Flood Insurance**

Learn about how Flood Insurance is available to provide added protection to your home and possessions. The National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP) is a Federal program that offers flood insurance to property owners and renters in participating communities. Homeowners insurance does not cover flood damage. [www.floodsmart.gov](http://www.floodsmart.gov)

Just a few inches of water from a flood can cause tens of thousands of dollars in damage. Flood insurance is the best way to protect yourself from devastating financial loss. Flood insurance is available to homeowners, renters, condo owners/renters, and commercial owners/renters. Costs vary depending on how much insurance is purchased, what it covers, and the property's flood risk.

Most States require Emergency Action Plans (EAP) for areas around dams, which you can find on the internet.

### **Here are Several Roles to Ensure You Are Safe**

- Dam Owner: responsible for the development of the EAP.
- Local Emergency Managers: understand the risk and the implications of a dam breach in their community as well as plan, prepare responses, warn, and evacuate the community.
- Local Planners and Executives: monitor inspections and apply pressure to dam owners to address deficiencies and educate the public in partnership with FEMA and the American Society for Dam Safety Officials.
- Dam Safety Inspectors: inspect dams comprehensively with a high degree of accuracy so that downstream communities understand their true risk and deficiencies can be proactively identified and mitigated.
- Tribal and State Floodplain Managers and Hazard Mitigation Officers: submit applications for mitigation assistance for dam safety initiatives within the State.

### **For More Information**

- FEMA's Dam Safety program: [www.fema.gov/plan/prevent/damfailure/ndsp.shtm](http://www.fema.gov/plan/prevent/damfailure/ndsp.shtm)
- Association of State Dam Safety Officials: [www.damsafety.org](http://www.damsafety.org)
- Dam Safety Action: [www.damsafetyaction.org](http://www.damsafetyaction.org)
- National Inventory of Dams: <https://nid.usace.army.mil>
- American Society of Civil Engineers Infrastructure Report Card—Dams: [www.infrastructurereportcard.org/fact-sheet/dams](http://www.infrastructurereportcard.org/fact-sheet/dams)
- About the National Flood Insurance Program: [www.floodsmart.gov/floodsmart/pages/about/nfip\\_overview.jsp](http://www.floodsmart.gov/floodsmart/pages/about/nfip_overview.jsp)

