

U.S. Department of Labor
Mine Safety and Health Administration
Protecting Miners' Safety and Health Since 1978

SAFETY ALERT
SPRING FORWARD for DAM SAFETY

Spring months create dam safety concerns due to combinations of intense or long periods of rainfall, melting snow, strong wind and the shedding of dead vegetation.

Most dam failures occur from overtopping of the embankment by flood waters or from internal erosion caused by uncontrolled seepage through the embankment or foundation.



BEST PRACTICES

- Conduct inspections following extreme weather events.
- Remember that changes in land use, such as construction, logging and farming can affect the runoff into the pool.
- Remove debris stuck in trashracks, culverts, spillways or ditches that can block drainage or reduce discharge capacity.
- Remove loose material from the perimeter of the pool area that can float if the pool level rises.
- Investigate changes in seepage quantity, abnormal or colored seepage, boils, whirlpools or saturated ground which may indicate uncontrolled seepage.
- Investigate embankment cracks, slumping or bulging that can indicate slope failure.
- Repair wave erosion or erosion gullies on the embankment slopes that can weaken the embankment.
- Repair erosion protection in spillways and ditches that is displaced from waves or large flows and repair any blocked pipes or culverts.



REMEMBER:
Safety depends upon what you
DO or DON'T DO.