



NEWS RELEASE

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Xcel Energy urges safety near dams

EAU CLAIRE, Wis.(April 2, 2018) – Gov. Scott Walker has proclaimed this week Dam Safety Awareness week in Wisconsin and Xcel Energy is reminding recreational and fishing enthusiasts to be safe around dams and hydroelectric facilities.

Boating or canoeing above or below a dam can be dangerous, especially during high river flows. “Unfortunately, last year two people lost their lives in western Wisconsin because the watercraft they were in capsized due to high water flow.” said Rob Olson, Hydro Operations at Xcel Energy. “If you’re operating a watercraft near a dam, you need to be aware of changing flow conditions from either the spillway or powerhouse. And if you recreate near a dam, you need to be aware of your surroundings so you can quickly respond to rapidly changing water conditions.”

Xcel Energy is a member of the Midwest Hydro Users Group (HUG), an association of dam owners who promote safe, efficient, economical and environmentally friendly use of hydroelectric power. The group urges outdoor enthusiasts to enjoy the many recreational resources that can be found on the rivers in Wisconsin and offers these tips for personal safety near dams:

- Obey all warning signs, barriers and flashing lights, horns and sirens.
- Wear a personal flotation device – a life jacket.
- Always stay outside buoy lines and away from restricted areas near dams.
- Never swim or wade near a dam.
- Never boat or fish alone when near a dam.
- Leave your boat motor running to provide maneuvering power.
- Stay clear of spillways. Changing currents and “boiling” waves can make boat control difficult near dams.
- Reverse currents occur below dams. They can pull a boat back toward the dam into the spillway and capsize it.
- Never anchor boats below a dam because water levels can change rapidly.
- Set an example for children, who may not be aware of the dangers, even if they can read. State explicitly where they can and cannot go and make sure you are close to them and can see them at all times.

For more information, visit:

https://www.xcelenergy.com/Energy_Portfolio/Renewable_Energy/Hydro/Safety. The Hydro Power Safety website also includes information to help residents respond in a timely fashion in the unlikely event of a dam failure, including maps and details about the warning siren system.