



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

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BUMPER SPRING SNOW MELT WILL MAKE RIVERS HIGH, FAST AND ICE COLD

SAN FRANCISCO- Pacific Gas and Electric Company and the California Department of Boating and Waterways are teaming up to advise river users to exercise caution during the spring snow melt.

This spring's relatively cold weather and late season snowfall has delayed snow melt by about three weeks. Now that warm weather has arrived, the accelerated snow melt will produce much higher river runoff than in previous years. River flows south of the Sierra's Mokelumne River are predicted to be the largest since 1998, and many reservoirs are expected to fill completely and have excess water spilling through dams' flood channels, as designed. Some of the largest spills are expected to take place below seasonal reservoirs on the Stanislaus, San Joaquin and North Fork Kings rivers. Additionally, side streams that are usually dry will experience high flow rates.

"The water temperature is likely to be colder at a given location than what has been experienced in the past," says Randy Livingston, senior director of PG&E's hydroelectric system. "River users need to take the appropriate safety precautions when recreating in and around mountain streams and reservoirs."

"Snow melt and resulting river flows can create treacherous conditions for all recreationists – waders, swimmers, rafters, boaters, anglers and even hikers cooling off at the waters edge," said Ray Tsuneyoshi, director of the Department of Boating and Waterways. "One way to stay safe is to wear a life jacket on the water and to never swim or recreate in the water alone."

Some additional safety tips are:

Know the Water

- Cold water can cause hyperventilation contributing to fatigue. When combined with swift water, even the strongest swimmers are easily overwhelmed.
- Cold water can stimulate the "gasp reflex" causing an involuntary inhalation of air or water.
- The "gag reflex," another result of cold water immersion, prevents air or water from passing in to the lungs causing asphyxiation.
- Sudden cold water immersion can trigger cardiac arrest.

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- Cold water entering the ear canal can cause vertigo and disorientation. This may confuse the swimmer causing the victim to swim deeper into the water.

Know your limits

- Swimming in open water is more difficult than in a swimming pool – people tire more quickly and can get into trouble.
- Cold water causes impairment leading to fatalities. Cold water reduces body heat 25-30 times faster than air does at the same temperature.

Wear a life jacket

- Even the best swimmers can misjudge the water and their skills when boating or swimming; conditions change quickly in open water. Wearing a life jacket can increase survival time.
- Plan ahead; wear a life jacket before entering the water.

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For more information about Pacific Gas and Electric Company, please visit our web site

www.pge.com

For more information about the California Department of Boating and Waterways, please

visit their web site www.dbw.ca.gov