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PG&E and Division of Boating and Waterways Warn of Higher, Colder Flows

SACRAMENTO, Calif.— With more snow melt this year than in recent years, California State Parks Division of Boating and Waterways (DBW) and Pacific Gas and Electric Company (PG&E) are warning water enthusiasts to be aware of colder and higher river and stream flows, and to take precautions when in or near water.

Snow pack measurements this winter and spring were greater than last year. The additional spring snow melt means more and colder water than California has seen in several years. The swift water can create treacherous conditions for all recreationists – waders, swimmers, paddlers, boaters, anglers and hikers cooling off at the water’s edge.

“While the drought is not over, we have the best snowpack in years. We ask those enjoying the outdoors to be careful near mountain streams, rivers and reservoirs. Water flows can fluctuate as snow melts faster on warmer days, so always be prepared for a change in conditions,” said Ed Halpin, senior vice president of generation and chief nuclear officer for PG&E.

“The month of May traditionally marks the beginning of boating season in California,” said DBW’s Deputy Director Lynn Sadler. “As we enjoy getting back out on and in the water, it is critical that we exercise extra caution and awareness, especially if venturing into unfamiliar waterways, or areas impacted by the drought. Have fun, but please stay safe.”

Below are some water safety tips:

Know the Water

- Sudden immersion in [cold water](#) can stimulate the “gasp reflex,” causing an involuntary inhalation of air or water. It can even trigger cardiac arrest, temporary paralysis, hypothermia and drowning. When faced with swift water, even the strongest swimmers may be easily overwhelmed.
- Cold water entering the ear canal can cause vertigo and disorientation. This may confuse swimmers, causing them to venture deeper into the water.
- Recreating in PG&E canals and flumes is strictly prohibited. Stay out of these water conveyances, which are very dangerous due to slippery sides and fast moving 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. It reduces body heat 25 to 30 times faster than air does at the same temperature.
- Many unseen obstacles can be lurking below the water's surface - this is especially the case during ongoing drought conditions. Swift water can make these obstacles even more treacherous. Guided trips for inexperienced paddlers are recommended.

Wear a Life Jacket

- Conditions change quickly in open water and even the best swimmers can misjudge the water and their skills when boating or swimming. Wearing a properly-fitted U.S. Coast Guard-approved life jacket can increase survival time.
- A life jacket can also provide some thermal protection against the onset of hypothermia and keep you afloat until someone else can rescue you.

Parental Supervision

- Actively supervise children in and around open bodies of water, giving them your undivided attention. Appoint a designated “water watcher,” taking turns with other adults.
- Teach children that swimming in open water is not the same as swimming in a pool: they need to be aware of uneven surfaces, river currents, ocean undertow and changing weather.

Know the Law

- Every child under 13 must wear a Coast Guard-approved life jacket when on a moving recreational vessel of any length.
- A Coast Guard-approved life jacket must be carried for each person on board a boat. This includes rigid or inflatable paddlecraft.
- Every person on board a personal watercraft (popularly known as “jet skis”) and any person being towed behind a vessel must wear a Coast Guard-approved life jacket.
- It is against the law to operate a boat or water ski with a blood alcohol concentration (BAC) of 0.08 percent or more. You can be arrested even when your BAC is less than 0.08 percent if conditions are deemed to be unsafe.

For more water safety information, please visit www.BoatCalifornia.com.

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About California's Drought

Every Californian should take steps to conserve water at home, at work and even when recreating outdoors. Find out how at SaveOurWater.com and Drought.CA.Gov.

About DBW

DBW enhances public access to California's waterways and promotes on-the-water safety to California's more than four million motorized and non-motorized boaters through programs funded by vessel registration fees, boating fuel tax dollars and boating facility construction loan payments. For more information, visit www.dbw.parks.ca.gov.



About PG&E

PG&E owns and operates 98 reservoirs, many of which are open to boating and fishing and offer facilities such as campgrounds, picnic areas, boat launches and kayak put in and take out points. Please visit www.pge.com/recreation for information or to make online camping reservations. For information about PG&E's power generation public safety program, please call (415) 973-SAFE.

Pacific Gas and Electric Company, a subsidiary of [PG&E Corporation](http://www.pge.com) (NYSE:PCG), is one of the largest combined natural gas and electric utilities in the United States. Based in San Francisco, with more than 20,000 employees, the company delivers some of the nation's cleanest energy to nearly 16 million people in Northern and Central California. For more information, visit www.pge.com/ and www.pge.com/en/about/newsroom/index.page.



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