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“STAY CLEAR! STAY SAFE” OPG warns that warmer weather means faster and higher water

Ontario Power Generation (OPG) officials are reminding parents to use extreme care around Ontario waterways this spring, particularly on rivers and lakes that are near hydroelectric stations and dams.

“Our message is: Stay Clear! Stay Safe!” said Dave Heath, Plant Manager for OPG’s Niagara Plant Group.

“Easter is the first long weekend so people start to think about being outdoors. Fishing and boating season is right around the corner and this is the perfect time to go over water safety plans with your friends and family,” he added.

Most hydroelectric facilities are remotely controlled by operators who may be kilometres away. To meet the fluctuating demand for electricity throughout the day, these operators open or close dams or start or stop generators as needed. This causes frequent and rapid changes in the water flow and levels often creating strong undertows, turbulence, and sudden, powerful gushes of water moving downstream in what was once calm looking surface water.

All waterways where an OPG dam or hydroelectric station is located have well-positioned warning signs, buoys, fences, booms, and barriers.

“They are there for the public’s safety and to let everyone know that the areas around the signs are dangerous, so Stay Clear! Stay Safe says Heath.

OPG offers the public a number of educational materials on water safety around dams and hydroelectric stations including a brochure, a DVD for adults and an educational interactive computer game for children. The OPP and OPG also have a television ad that warns people to stay clear, and stay safe near hydroelectric dams and stations. You can view the ad, or request free educational materials, by visiting www.opg.com

OPG MEDIA CONTACT

Media Desk -- 1-877-592-4008 or 416-592-4008