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May 29, 2019

News Release

WATER SAFETY ADVICE

EL PASO, Texas – In the next few days, water will begin flowing in El Paso area canals and the Rio Grande as water from the Elephant Butte Reservoir is released on May 31. The El Paso Fire Department, El Paso Water Utilities, and the Drowning Prevention Coalition of El Paso are joining forces at a news conference to remind the community to practice water safety, especially near the river and area canals.

What: Water Safety News Conference

Where: EPFD Fire Station 3 – 721 E. Rio Grande

Who: EPWater Vice President Alan Shubert, Drowning Prevention of El Paso officials, and the El Paso Fire Dept. Water Rescue Team.

Officials encourage the community to follow these water safety tips:

- Never play in drainage ditches or arroyos, even when dry. Sudden water flows may happen at any time.
- Do not allow children to play near or in a river or another bodies of water, including ponds, channels, and drains. A sudden increase in the water levels and pressure can easily drag a person into the water.
- If you see a flooded street, do not attempt to drive through it. **Turn around, don't drown.**
- Do not allow children to play in flooded alleys, yards, streets, or pits.
- Do not try crossing or swimming in canals or ponding areas. The speed of water moving beneath the surface is constant and can be powerful even if surface looks slow moving and calm. Hidden hazards could be present under the water as well.
- If you fall into fast-moving water, do not try to stand up. The force of the water will push you over and hold you under. Lay on your back with your feet pointing downstream and toes pointing up toward the surface. Always look downstream and be prepared to fend off any obstacles with your feet.
- Knowing how to swim does not make you drown-proof.
- If you see someone in need of help, dial 9-1-1 immediately.

Visit epwater.org, dcpelpaso.org or elpasofire.org for more on water safety. Follow the El Paso Fire Department on [Twitter](https://twitter.com/elpasofire), [Instagram](https://www.instagram.com/elpasofire) and [Facebook](https://www.facebook.com/elpasofire) for updates.

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