



NEWS RELEASE

Department of Public Safety

118 W. Capitol Ave. • Pierre, SD 57501 • (605) 773-3178 • fax: (605) 773-3018 • www.state.sd.us/dps

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CONTACT: Terry Woster, Public Information Office, 605.773.3231

Officials Discourage Residents from Re-Occupying Homes, Businesses

PIERRE, S.D. – Officials in Pierre and Fort Pierre are discouraging residents from re-occupying homes and businesses at this time.

Many residents who have been displaced from at-risk areas of the communities by the record Missouri River flows are anxious to go back to their homes and businesses. In areas where the levees have protected property from the rising water, those residents are asking if they may return home.

Officials strongly encourage residents to consider their safety first and to remain out of their homes at this time. **The message isn't a policy change. It reiterates the message Governor Dennis Daugaard gave on June 1 in his call for voluntary evacuation of threatened areas of the two communities. At that time, the Governor said residents in those areas should remain out of their homes until officials determined it was safe to return.**

"This is a situation we have never been in before and there are a lot of unknown factors," says Pierre Mayor Laurie Gill. "We encouraged evacuations in areas where it was unsafe. We continue to believe those areas are unsafe."

Potential risks from the current 150,000 cfs releases from the Oahe Dam are:

- Possible failure of the levee system. This could send a high volume of water into the dry side of the levee, quickly inundating low-lying areas.
- A significant rain event may cause flooding of low lying areas. Storm sewers are plugged to prevent floodwaters from backing up into the system.
- Standing water and potential sewage backup create significant health risks from mold and bacteria.
- The possibility that utilities such as water and electricity will be shut off.
- The current voluntary evacuation policy is based on 150,000 cfs. This could change if the snowmelt or a rain event brings more water than expected into the system.
- Residents are asked not to remove any sandbag walls until releases from the Oahe Dam are reduced.

"If you choose to move back into your home or business in spite of safety concerns, please notify local authorities," Fort Pierre Mayor Sam Tidball urged. "If you do go back,

be prepared to leave again quickly, and have essential items such as medicines and important papers ready to take with you.”