

BE SAFE ON WINTER ICE

Incident Statistics

- Each winter in Canada someone dies in an ice-related incident, and countless others fall through the ice and have a close brush with death.
- Over half of drownings related to snowmobiling occur after dark.
- Consumption of alcohol or drugs continue to be a contributing factor in snowmobiling related drownings.

Ice Rescue

- Call 911. Be careful, you can fall through the ice too.
- Anyone on or near the weak ice should slowly lay down.
- Tell the person to kick and slowly ease their way out of the water.
- Have them crawl or roll away from the broken ice.
- Use a long reaching assist, i.e. Rope, stick or ladder.
- Make sure you are both far enough away from the hole before you get close to them.
- Help them into dry clothes and treat for

hypothermia.

Make Ice Safety #1!

Playing on ice, skating, ice fishing and snowmobiling are a natural part of winter.

Use designated ice surfaces.

Designated ponds for skating should be maintained by well informed personnel and are regularly tested to ensure that the ice is thick enough and strong enough for recreational use.

Minimum Ice Thickness for New Clear Hard Ice:

Recommendations for ice thickness are based on clear, blue or green ice. White ice has air or snow within it and should be considered suspect.

- **3" (7cm) or less STAY OFF**
- 4" (10cm) ice fishing, walking, cross country skiing
- 5" (12cm) one snowmobile or ATV
8"-12" (20-30cm) one car or small pickup
- 12"-15" (30-38cm) one medium truck (pickup or van)

Measure ice thickness in several locations.

Conditions such as currents and water depths affect ice thickness.

Ice sections very close together can have very different thickness.

Always supervise children playing on or near ice.

Insist that they wear a lifejacket, PFD or thermal protection buoyant suit.

Have an emergency plan. Plan and practice what to do if someone falls through the ice.

Stay off river ice. Currents can quickly change ice thickness over night or between different parts of the river.

Never go onto ice alone.

A buddy may be able to rescue you and/or go for help.

Before you leave shore, tell someone else where you are going and expected time of return.

Wear a snowmobile flotation suit or a life jacket/PFD.

A life jacket over your snowmobile suit or layered winter clothes increases your survival chances.

SNOWMOBILES ARE DEAD WEIGHT ON ICE

Take safety equipment

Include ice picks, ice staff, rope, and a small personal safety kit in your pocket, which includes a pocketknife, compass, whistle, fire starter kit and a cell phone.

Keep your dog on a leash

Go for help, if your dog falls through the ice. The ice will not likely support you either.

Avoid traveling on ice at night.

Snowmobile related drownings often occur at night as it is difficult to see open holes in the ice.

If you drive on ice, have an escape plan. Open your windows, unlock your doors, and turn on your lights. This will allow you to quickly escape from your vehicle.

Ice Myths and Cold Realities

Myth: Ice forms at the same thickness everywhere on a body of water.

Reality: Ice is rarely uniform in thickness. It can be a foot thick in one place and only an inch thick just 0 feet away.

Myth: Thick ice is strong.

Reality: Even thick ice may be weak, especially if it has frozen and thawed repeatedly or if it contains

layers of snow or water.

Myth: For the same thickness, all ice has the same strength.

Reality: Different types of ice have different strengths for the same thickness.

Clear blue, black or green ice is the strongest. 4” (10 cm) of this ice should safely support 1 or 2 people.

White or opaque ice should be at least twice as thick (8” or 20 cm) to safely support the same number of people.

Myth: Snow on top of ice makes it stronger and freeze faster.

Reality: Snow acts like an insulating blanket. The ice under the snow will be thinner and weaker.

A new snowfall can also insulate, warm-up and melt existing ice. Ice with layers of snow may not support anyone.

Myth: Extreme cold means safe, thick ice.

Reality: A cold snap with very cold temperatures quickly weakens ice and can cause large cracks within half a day.

A warm spell can take several days to weaken the ice.

Myth: If you know where you are going and what the ice is like, it is safe to travel

across the ice at night.

Reality: It is particularly dangerous to travel on ice at night. Ice conditions change daily and you will generally not be able to see hazards or warning signs at night.

Myth: The better you swim, the better your chances of rescuing yourself if you fall through ice.

Reality: After as little as five minutes, cold water begins to rob you of your ability to move your limbs.

This makes it very difficult for you to get out of the water, no matter how well you can swim!