

# Playing on Nature's Ice Rinks

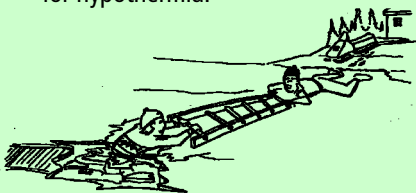
## Ice safety on ponds and lakes

### 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.
- ❑ Out of 32 drowning deaths in Alberta and the Northwest Territories in 2009, three occurred on or around the ice.

### Ice Rescue

- ❑ **First, call 911.** Be careful; you can fall through the ice too.
- ❑ Anyone on or near the weak ice should slowly lie down.
- ❑ Use a long reaching assist, i.e. rope, stick or ladder.
- ❑ Tell the person to kick and slowly ease out of the water.
- ❑ Have them crawl or roll away from the broken ice.
- ❑ Make sure you are both far enough away from the hole before you stand up.
- ❑ Help them into dry clothes and treat for hypothermia.



For more information, contact:



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As cold weather approaches, families look forward to spending time outdoors on the natural ice of ponds and lakes. The hours you spend skating, playing hockey, fishing or snowmobiling on ice can be a favorite part of winter. Unlike in an arena, the ice you find outdoors is not always trustworthy. Outdoor ice can be dangerous. Every year, Canadians fall through it, and some do not make it out. By using safety rules and common sense, you can keep your memories pleasant ones.

The Lifesaving Society recommends that you consider the following factors:

### Avoid moving water

Ice formed on creeks and rivers cannot be trusted. The current and changes in water level weakens the ice. Ice sections very close together can have very different thicknesses.

### Hidden factors can weaken ice on a ponds or lakes

The ice above a spring or an outlet pipe will be thinner and weaker. Snow also acts like an insulating blanket. The ice under the snow will be thinner and weaker.

### Choose shallow water

If the water under the ice is shallow enough to stand in, it reduces the hazards.

### Maintaining safety

Once you have selected an ice surface, mark it off so that everyone knows what areas are safe. Test ice often and in several places to make sure it is still thick and strong. Remember to have a buddy on hand and wear a lifejacket during testing and maintenance.

### Avoid water bodies with changing water levels

Fluctuations in water depth in some storm water retention ponds will weaken the ice.

### What color is the ice?

Recommendations for ice thickness are based on clear, blue or green ice. White ice has air or snow trapped within it and is not strong.

### Minimum Ice Thickness for New Clear Hard Ice:

- 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)

Ice thickness cards are available through the Lifesaving Society.

### Spring Ice is Rotten Ice

Stop using the ice once spring thaws begin. Even if ice measures at the right thickness, candling during melting weakens it vertically. The ice can no longer be trusted.