

Skating on Winter Ponds

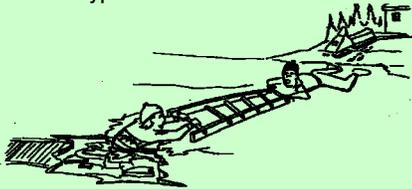
Choosing and Creating Safe Ice Surfaces

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.
- Use a long reaching assist, i.e. rope, stick or ladder.
- Tell the person to kick and slowly ease their way 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 get close to them.
- Help them into dry clothes and treat for hypothermia.



For more information, contact:



LIFESAVING SOCIETY®

The Lifeguarding Experts

11759 Groat Road, Edmonton, AB T5M 3K6
Tel: 780 415 1755 | Fax: 780 427 9334
experts@lifesaving.org | www.lifesaving.org

Many communities, camps and homeowners use natural waterbodies such as lakes or ponds for winter recreational activities. Choosing and maintaining a designated area for ice fishing and skating takes more than just shoveling off the snow cover. The Lifesaving Society recommends that you take into consideration 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.

Avoid waterbodies with changing water levels

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

Hidden factors can weaken ice on a ponds or lakes

The ice above a spring or an outlet pipe will be thinner and weaker.

Beware of snow buildup

Snow 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.

Mark the designated area and supervise users to ensure they stay in the area.

Have an emergency plan

Plan and practice what to do if someone falls through the ice.

Test the ice thickness

Ice designated for use must be regularly tested to ensure that it is thick enough and strong enough.

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.

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 Maintenance/Testing

When testing ice thickness or performing ice maintenance, use the buddy system and wear flotation suits or lifejackets/PFD for protection if you break through the ice.

Spring Ice is Rotten Ice

As ice melts, it undergoes a process known as candling which weakens the ice along vertical channels. Ice depth can no longer be used to determine if the ice is safe.