

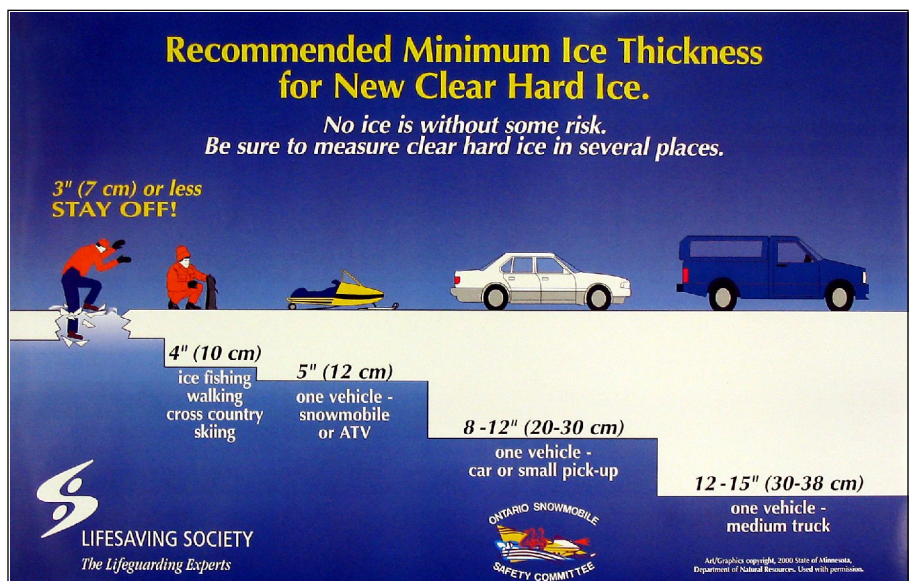


THIN ICE AND COLD WATER – A CHILL THAT KILLS

Thin ice is responsible for many fatalities each year. Hypothermia, which is a decrease in body temperature, kills people in cold water by reducing their ability to swim or stay afloat. A person who has fallen through the ice can eventually die of cardiac arrest if he or she is not rescued or rewarmed.

To avoid this danger, the Lifesaving Society offers these safety tips:

- Always check ice thickness before venturing out. Snowmobiles require at least five inches of clear solid ice and cars at least eight inches to a foot of clear solid ice.
- Be suspicious. You cannot tell the strength of the ice by its appearance. Temperature, thickness, snow cover, water depth, size of body of water, currents and distribution of the load on top of the ice are all factors affecting ice safety.
- Before you head onto any ice, check with local authorities for known ice conditions, thin ice areas or dangerous open water conditions.



Despite these precautions, there are no guarantees with ice. If you break through:

- Don't panic – the clothes you are wearing will trap air and keep you buoyant.
- Turn towards the direction you came from and place your hands and arms on the unbroken surface.
- Kick your feet and try to push yourself forward on top of the unbroken ice on your stomach like a seal.
- Once you are lying on the ice, don't stand up. Roll away from the break until you are on solid ice.

The Lifesaving Society is Canada's lifeguarding expert. The Society is a national, charitable organization working to prevent drowning and water-related injury through its training programs, Water Smart® public education campaign and aquatic safety management services. Each year in Nova Scotia the Society certifies over 8,000 people in its lifesaving, lifeguarding, and leadership courses.

10 ICE SMART SAFETY TIPS

Ice is never 100% safe: the best advice is to stay off it. If you do venture onto the ice, remember:

1. Check the weather and avoid ice-related activities on warm or stormy days.
2. Check ice conditions with knowledgeable local individuals (e.g. city staff, police, snowmobile clubs, etc.). Obey all ice warning signs.
3. Avoid vehicle travel on ice whenever possible, especially if you have been drinking alcohol. Remember that even one drink can dull your senses, slow your reaction time and impair your judgement.
4. Keep away from unfamiliar paths or unknown ice, and avoid traveling on ice at night.
5. Never go onto the ice alone. A buddy may be able to rescue you or go for help if you get into difficulty.
6. Before you leave shore, inform someone of your destination and expected time of return.
7. A thermal protection buoyant suit will increase your chances of survival if you do go through the ice. If you do not have one, wear a lifejacket/personal flotation device (PFD) over an ordinary snowmobile suit or layered winter clothing.
8. Assemble a small personal safety kit, no larger than the size of a man's wallet, to carry on your person. The kit should include a lighter, waterproof matches, or magnesium fire starter, pocketknife, compass and whistle.
9. In addition to the above safety equipment, you should also carry ice picks, an ice staff and rope. A cellular phone could also help save your life.
10. Insist that children, if they do play on ice, are always under adult supervision. Children not within arm's reach have ventured too far.

Did You Know?

ICE SELDOM FREEZES OR THAWS AT A UNIFORM RATE. IT CAN BE 30 CENTIMETRES (12 INCHES) THICK IN ONE SPOT, BUT ONLY 2 CENTIMETRES (1 INCH) THICK A FEW METRES AWAY. ANYONE HEADING ONTO ICE SHOULD ALWAYS CHECK FIRST WITH SOMEONE WHO KNOWS THE LOCAL CONDITIONS, SUCH AS THIN ICE AREAS OR DANGEROUS OPEN WATER CONDITIONS.
