



What is safe ice?

There really is no such thing. In fact, if you go out on the ice, you should be ready to fall through it. Ice is never 100 percent safe. You can't judge the strength of ice just by looking at it. Strength is based on many factors — the depth of water under the ice, size of the water body, water chemistry and currents, the distribution of the load on the ice, and local climatic conditions throughout the season.

Always wear an approved personal flotation device (life jacket) under your winter gear when you walk out onto ice. But never wear one while in an enclosed vehicle.

Know the local weather conditions and forecast before venturing out during the winter.



www.ci.minneapolis.mn.us/fire

In association with



www.fire.state.mn.us

ICE SAFETY



Just another day in the arctic...



What can I do?

Wear proper winter gear including three layers of protection, sturdy boots with good tread, and a personal flotation device.

Check out the recent weather conditions and temperature. Ice may have been safe last week, but not today!

Ask about current conditions at a local resort or bait shop. They will know about danger spots such as aeration systems or traditionally unsafe areas. Look for postings and hazards before heading out on the ice.

Create a plan ahead of time. Know what to do if you do break through. Share the plan with your companions and describe the use of any rescue devices you have with you. Encourage all people to carry rope, ice picks and a flotation device to help save your life or that of a companion.

What if I fall through the ice?

You hear a crack and fall through. Suddenly you find yourself immersed in water so cold it immediately affects your response time. Avoid taking in water and extend your arms to catch yourself and slow your submersion. Stay calm, access your personal rescue tools, and carry out your plan.

Turn yourself back in the direction from which you came and spread your arms in front of you to disperse your weight. If you have picks or a sharp tool, get a good bite on the ice. Kick your feet continuously while pulling yourself to the surface. Once you are on the surface, lean forward and roll away from the hole, spreading out your weight as much as possible.

Get off the ice in the safest manner and warm yourself immediately. Remove clothing only when you have dry clothes or warm shelter.

You may enter a state of shock or experience other life threatening conditions, so seek medical help right away.

What if someone else falls through?

First, call 911 for help. Probably, someone near you is carrying a cell phone.

Do not run up to the hole! You can't help by becoming a victim yourself. Follow these steps:

PREACH – Shout to the victim. Explain how to attempt self-rescue as described above, and reassure them that help is on the way.

REACH –If you can safely reach the victim from a distance, extend an object such as a rope, ladder, or jumper cables to the victim. If the person starts to pull you in, release your grip on the object and try again.

THROW – Toss one end of a rope or something that will float to the victim. Tell the victim to tie the rope around himself before he is too weakened by the cold to grasp it. If a flotation device is available, throw it and tell him to put it on before he loses the ability to do so.

ROW – Find a light boat to push across the ice ahead of you. Push it to the edge of the hole, get into the boat and pull the victim in over the bow. Attach a rope to the boat so others can help pull you and the victim to safety.

GO – Find more help. Heroics by well-meaning but untrained rescuers sometimes result in two deaths. Call 911 for help and keep reassuring the victim that help is on the way and urge them to fight to survive. Do not risk your life to attempt to save a pet or other animal.

Personal Responsibility

Driving on ice? Be prepared to bail out in a hurry! Have your seat belt unfastened and a window rolled down to speed your escape.

Heating your icehouse? Keep combustibles outside of a three-foot circle around your heater and properly ventilate your structure.

We all have a responsibility to keep ourselves and those around us safe. Setting a good example and acting in a responsible manner will allow us to enjoy our outdoor activities without danger.

