



**DON'T TRY TO WALK ON WATER**

Walking across a frozen lake can sometimes be quicker than driving around it. It can also be life threatening.

One out of every 12 Canadians who drowns each year plunges to death through ice. Almost half of these incidents involve people walking, playing or fishing on ice and most victims are 15-44 year old males.

Why the danger? In many cases the ice is thin and dotted with open holes. Alcohol over the legal limit is involved in a third of the incidents. Darkness and falling snow may also play a role.

The tricky thing about ice is that conditions are always changing. A fishing patch that is solid one day may be fragile the next. A patch can be a foot thick in one spot and an inch thick just a few steps away. Rivers are dangerous because of the currents. High-risk areas on lakes include the shoreline and the ice around an open patch of water.

The only way to be safe is to avoid it. Never walk alone and keep away from unfamiliar paths or unknown ice, particularly at night, in late winter and early spring and while under the influence of alcohol.

If you fall through the ice, call for help. Try to kick, claw, and crawl your way to solid support. Move your legs into a swimming position and try to push yourself forward on your stomach. Don't stand up until you've rolled onto solid ice. Seek medical attention if required.

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 British Columbia the Society certifies over 20,000 people in its lifesaving, lifeguarding, and leadership courses.

For more information about the Lifesaving Society see [www.lifesaving.bc.ca](http://www.lifesaving.bc.ca).

**Recommended Minimum Ice Thickness for New Clear Hard Ice.**

*No ice is without some risk. Be sure to measure clear hard ice in several places.*

**7 cm (3") or less STAY OFF!!**

**10 cm (4")** ice fishing, walking, cross country skiing

**12 cm (5")** one vehicle: snowmobile or ATV

**20-30 cm (8 - 12")** one vehicle: car or small pick-up

**30-38 cm (12 - 15")** one vehicle: medium truck

**AdventureSmart**  
www.adventuresmart.ca

**LIFESAVING SOCIETY®**  
The Lifeguarding Experts

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# 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 IN CITIES AND TOWNS IS USUALLY WEAKER AND MORE DANGEROUS THAN ICE IN RURAL AREAS. THIS IS DUE TO A NUMBER OF FACTORS, INCLUDING SALT FROM NEARBY ROADS, AND MORE WATER MOVEMENT BECAUSE OF WATER AND SEWAGE TREATMENT PLANTS.

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