



Tilton-Northfield Fire & EMS

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February 15, 2012

Ice Safety—New Hampshire Ice Conditions Can Be Unpredictable

Chief Brad Ober and New Hampshire State Fire Marshal's Office urge outdoor enthusiasts to use caution on the ice.

"Before going onto a frozen lake, pond, or river it is important to take safety precautions to reduce the risk of falling through the ice," says J. William Degnan, New Hampshire State Fire Marshal. As temperatures fluctuate it is very important for residents to use caution. Walking, skating, ice fishing or other activities on the frozen bodies of water is a great way to get out and enjoy the fresh air during winter. For those participating in recreational activities on the ice, Tilton-Northfield Fire & EMS Chief, Brad Ober, urges common sense and asks that you follow these recommended safety tips.

SAFETY TIPS

The following rules should be followed to ensure ice safety:

- Never assume ice is safe.
- Never go on untested lakes or ponds and NEVER go on the ice alone.
- Beware of ice covered with snow. Snow can insulate ice and keep it from freezing. Snow hides cracks as well as weak and open ice.
- Ice seldom freezes or thaws at a uniform rate. It can be a foot thick in one spot and an inch thick in another.
- Ice formed over flowing water (including springs under the surface) is generally weaker than ice over still water.
- Snowmobile riders should keep ice safety in mind! Check local conditions before heading out on snowmobile trails and ice.
- Know the body of water, nearby street, and where the nearest location is to go for help.
- Always keep your pets on a leash. If a pet falls through the ice, do not attempt a rescue-go for help.

WHAT TO DO WHEN SOMEONE HAS FALLEN THROUGH THE ICE:

- **Call 911**
- If you're not alone, always have someone wait for the emergency responder to bring them to the exact location of the victim.
- Try to throw something to the victim to reach and retrieve them (a rope, tree branch, even jumper cables from the car, etc.) but never attempt to go onto the ice yourself in order to rescue someone. The ice could NOT support their weight; it will NOT support your weight.
- Try to remain calm and reassuring to the victim.
- If you fall in, try not to panic. Turn toward the direction you came from. Place your hands and arms on the unbroken surface, working forward by kicking your feet. Once the ice is solid enough to hold you, and you can pull yourself out, remain lying on the ice (do not stand; lying down spreads your weight across a wider area, lessening the weight on any one spot) and roll away from the hole. Crawl the way you came, keeping your weight distributed, until you return to solid ice or ground.
- As the season progresses, ice rapidly changes with varying weather conditions. Plan accordingly and use caution!