

In winter, Alberta's frozen lakes and ponds offer fun and affordable recreation. However, if ice conditions are ignored there is a risk of falling through the ice. Thin ice related injuries such as hypothermia and drowning happen every year.

Fortunately, these ice-related injuries and deaths can usually be prevented.

Injury Prevention Tips

Prepare for the ice

Know what to do if you hear the ice crack:

- * Lay down on the ice
- * Crawl or roll back to land
- * Teach children to call for help loudly and clearly if they are in trouble
- * **Kids:** Check with a responsible adult before heading out onto or near the ice

Check Out the Ice

- * When planning activities on lakes or rivers, check that the ice is smooth and at least 10 centimetres or 4 inches thick. Check with local authorities for more information on ice thickness.
- * Understand that ice is often unpredictable
- * Ice formed on moving water such as rivers and creeks varies in thickness. Avoid walking on ice that is on or near moving water.
- * In spring weather, thick ice is not necessarily safe. During the spring melt, lines of impurities in the ice melt very quickly, creating weak spots.
- * Ice seldom freezes or thaws at an equal rate
- * If in doubt, don't go on the ice

On the Ice

- * Obey all signs posted on or near the ice
- * Ensure children only play on or near ice when a responsible adult is supervising
- * Use the "buddy system" - Never walk on ice when alone

Rescue Procedures

If someone goes through the ice know the following:

Self-Rescue Steps

- * Float on your stomach facing the shore
- * Slowly reach forward onto the ice—do not push down on it
- * Kick your legs to slowly push your torso onto the ice
- * Crawl or roll away from the hole
- * Get medical help immediately. If you can't climb onto the ice, float in the water and call for help loudly and clearly.

Helping Others

A rescue attempt can result in two victims instead of one. Instead of attempting to pull out a victim yourself, help them rescue themselves.

- * Phone 911 for help
- * Call out the self-rescue steps to the victim
- * Push or throw something (like a long stick, a branch, a rope, or floating aid) to the victim that they can use to get out of the water or float on until expert help arrives

Remember—Reach, throw—but don't go!

