



St. Joseph County Sheriff's Office



ICE SAFETY TIPS

The following rules should be followed anytime you venture out onto ice;

- Never assume that the ice is safe.
- The only safe ice is at a skating rink.
- Never skate on an untested lake or pond.
- The ice should have a minimum thickness of [6] inches.
- Never skate alone.
- Only skate during the day or if an area is illuminated
- Know the body of water that you are on, nearby streets, and where the nearest location is that you can go to get help.
- Never use ice for a shortcut.
- Never go out onto the ice after an animal or toy.

ICE STRENGTH

With respect to the ice strength, a point of great importance to skaters and others is that you cannot determine the strength of the ice simply by its looks and thickness, the daily temperature, or whether or not the ice is covered with snow. The strength of ice is determined by several factors:

- Chemistry of the water [Salt or Fresh].
- Local climatic factors such as wind, snow, rain, and temperature fluctuations which can vary considerably from day to day.
- The presence of currents such as at stream inflows / outflows, and along streams or rivers.
- The presence of springs and the size and depth of the lake or pond.
- The distribution of the weight or load placed on the ice.
- The signs of expansion cracks.

For immediate emergency response – call **911**

What to do when someone has fallen through the ice:

- Do not attempt to rescue the victim. If the ice could not support their weight, it very likely will not support your weight.
- Try to calm and reassure the victim and have them stay afloat.

- Go to nearby location and call 911 for help. Also wait for emergency responders to arrive so that you can bring them to the exact location of the victim.
- If with a responsible adult, have the adult return to try and assist the victim from shore.
- Try to provide victim with something to help them stay afloat such as plastic milk or soda bottles, or a spare tire.
- If the victim is stable and afloat try to send something to reach and retrieve victim such as a rope, extension cord, ladder, branch, boat or tying clothes together.
- If victim is retrieved to shore, take steps to keep victim warm. Remove wet clothes, wrap the victim in a blanket until rescue personnel arrive.

It takes at least 5 to 7 days of temperatures in the low 20's before ice *may become safe*.

Remember: *Safe Ice* is found at my local Ice Rink. *Safe outdoor skating* must have adult supervision.

ALL EMERGENCIES DIAL – 911