

# Be Safe on the Ice!

## Pre-reading

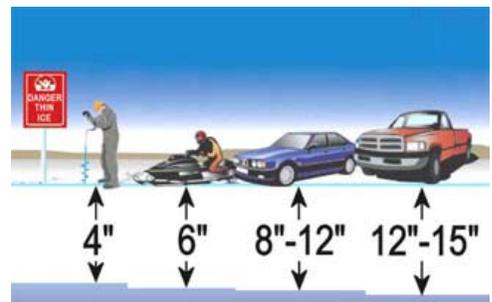
Questions: What do you know about ice safety?

Definitions: DNR – Department of Natural Resources

Specialist – a person with expertise in a specific subject matter

Common sense – good judgment regarding everyday situations

Vigorous – having strength and power



## Reading

The winter's first ice is already skimming Minnesota lakes and ponds. Ice skaters, ice fishermen, snowmobilers, and others are ready to get out on it! Unfortunately, every year we hear of people drowning because they broke through ice they thought was safe.

"I know most of us think to ourselves, 'If I fall through, I'll just climb onto the solid ice and be just fine,'" said Tim Smalley, water safety specialist for the DNR. "Unfortunately, this is much easier said than done. First, when you fall through the ice, you're taken by surprise. If you knew you were going to break through, you wouldn't have walked in there in the first place."

The sudden shock of plunging into freezing water adds to the confusion and panic. "Cold water saps body heat 25 times faster than air of the same temperature. Just try holding your hand in a cooler full of ice water for more than a few seconds and you'll see what I mean," Smalley said.

Then there's the difficult task of climbing out of the cold water and onto the surface of the wet and slippery ice. Unless people have a plan of action for just such emergencies, their chances of getting out safely can be pretty slim.

Smalley advised, "There is no reason that you can't have a safe and enjoyable time on the ice as long as you follow some basic safety **guidelines**. For example, don't walk on new clear ice less than four inches thick. Exercise a little common sense."

Smalley recommends calling ahead to a local bait shop or resort, and asking them what the conditions are on the particular lake you're going to. He also suggests carrying along a set of ice claws, or ice picks, to rescue yourself or a friend. Such items can be purchased at a bait shop or sporting goods store. The DNR recommends keeping ice picks in your pocket for quick access.

If you should fall through the ice, try to remain calm. Turn in the water toward the direction from which you came; that is probably the strongest ice. Dig the points of the picks into the ice. Then vigorously kick your feet while pulling yourself onto the surface by sliding forward on the ice.

Roll away from the area of weak ice. This will distribute weight to help avoid breaking through again. Seek shelter, heat, and warm, dry clothing. Drink nonalcoholic and decaffeinated drinks. If you or someone you know is shivering uncontrollably or **exhibits** any other ill effects, call 911.

Source: MN Depart of Natural Resources – *Make a set of ice rescue claws (2006-12-04)*

**Level 6.5**

## Understanding

1. Why is it difficult to climb out of cold water? (List at least two reasons.) \_\_\_\_\_  
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\_\_\_\_\_
2. What are **guidelines**? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
3. Where could you probably find more ice safety information? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
4. What should all ice-goers have with them? Why? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
5. What are three other ice safety tips? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
6. What does the word **exhibit** mean in this reading? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
7. Why do people venture out onto the ice? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

## Writing

Option A: Summarize the reading in your own words.

Option B: What kind of ice activities do you enjoy? How do you stay safe on the ice?

Option C: Write about any negative ice experiences you or anyone you know have endured.

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