



Ice Fishing

Ice fishing and hunting are among the favourite winter pastimes for recreational and daily living activities. Twenty-two per cent of immersion deaths involving ice can be attributed to fishing, and hunting accounts for 9%. In addition, causes of falls into cold water (not through ice) include fishing (8%) and hunting (3%). There are several steps that can be taken to ensure your time in, on or around ice is always safe and enjoyable.

Tips for safe ice fishing

- **Don't trust the ice—always be aware of the thickness and quality of ice to reduce risk of breaking through**
 - Where ice is checked for thickness, obey posted signs on when and where ice surface is acceptable for activities.
 - Avoid any open holes in lakes and rivers, or open ocean water.
 - Avoid traveling on any ice in non-daylight hours.
 - Be aware of currents and/or tides as these locations cannot be trusted to have consistent ice thickness.
- **Fish with a buddy**
 - Avoid going out on the ice alone to ensure rescue is an option. Discuss rescue procedures in advance to ensure all fishers know how to perform a rescue safely.
 - Pets should be on a leash so they don't venture out onto the ice.
 - If your pet falls through the ice, call for help. Resist the temptation to go out onto the ice after them.

- **Check the ice thickness**
 - Many ice fishers will drive a motor vehicle, snowmobile or ATV to their fishing hut. No activity should be carried out on ice less than 15cm thick. In the presence of snow on ice, the minimum thickness would need to be doubled to 30cm.
- **Wear a flotation device and cold protection suit, even if you're fishing from shore or on thick ice.**
- **Carry rescue equipment**
 - This includes ice picks, a rope, a cell phone (in a waterproof container) and a first aid kit. Other safety equipment to be considered includes: flashlight, waterproof matches/lighter, tool kit, candles and survival blanket.
- **Save the alcohol for when you get home and are telling the fish tales.**
- **Take a Red Cross first aid class to learn the signs and treatment for cold-related emergencies: [redcross.ca/findacourse](https://www.redcross.ca/findacourse)**

