



# Andover Fire Rescue

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With the cold weather finally upon us Andover Fire Rescue would like to remind you that the ice on lakes and ponds in the area are not safe to be utilized for any activities.

The fluctuation in temperatures over the last few weeks has not allowed for enough ice development to support even pets. Additionally, with the weather forecast predicting a warm-up over the next several days, what ice that is present on any body of water will be significantly weakened further creating unsafe conditions.

Here are a few ice safety tips to always follow:

- Never go on the ice alone. A friend may be able to rescue you or go for help if you fall through the ice.
- Always keep pets on a leash. If a pet falls through the ice, do not attempt a rescue. Go for help!
- Beware of ice covered with snow. Snow can insulate ice and keep it strong, but it can also prevent it from getting thicker or freezing at all.
- Ice seldom freezes or thaws at a uniform rate over an entire body of water. The ice can be one foot thick in some areas and only one inch thick in other areas.
- If a companion falls through the ice and you are unable to safely reach them from shore, throw something to them ( a rope, tree branch, floatation device of any kind). If that does not work, call 911 and get immediate assistance for the victim. Do not become a victim yourself.
- If you fall in, try not to panic. Turn in the direction you came from. Place your hands and arms on the unbroken ice surface, and attempt to work your body forward by kicking your feet. Once the ice is solid enough to hold you, and you can pull yourself out, remain lying down on the ice and roll away from the hole. Never stand up! Crawl back the way you came, keeping your weight distributed until you get to solid ice or ground.
- The most important tool is common sense.
- Remember there is no such thing as safe ice!
- General ice thickness guidelines:
  - 2" or less – Stay off!
  - 4" Ice fishing or other activities on foot
  - 5" Snowmobile or ATV

8"-12" Car or small pick-up  
12"-15" Medium truck

The Department of Fire Services web site has additional information on this topic at [www.mass.gov/dfs](http://www.mass.gov/dfs) then click on *Fire Safety Topics*. This information is suitable for the general public and is of particular importance to children. Available are:

- ***Tri-fold*** pamphlet on Ice and Cold Water Safety in English and Spanish.
- ***PowerPoint*** presentation on Ice and Cold Water Safety for middle school and older grades.

Also, there is relevant information on the Centers for Disease Control water safety link

[http://www.cdc.gov/HomeandRecreationalSafety/Watersafety/waterinjuries\\_factsheet.html](http://www.cdc.gov/HomeandRecreationalSafety/Watersafety/waterinjuries_factsheet.html)