

## **Minnesota Facts**

- Last winter, two people died after falling through the ice.
- Over the last 10 years, 55 people drowned after breaking through thin ice.
- Sixty-five percent of all ice drownings are vehicle related.
- Last winter, 22 people died in snowmobile accidents.
- Last winter, 49 percent of snowmobile deaths were alcohol or drug related.

## **Safe Behavior**

- Never walk on ice less than four inches thick. Don't snowmobile on less than five inches or drive your car on less than eight inches of new, clear ice.
- Warn children to stay away from ice-covered ponds and streams. Beware of shallow areas where springs might carry warm water to the surface to form thin spots.
- Use caution near the shoreline-water level drops may occur close to shore, and ice may not be supported by water underneath.
- Do not go out on the ice alone. Let someone know where you're going and when you plan to return.
- Avoid alcoholic beverages, especially when snowmobiling. Alcohol causes the body to lose heat more rapidly, even though one may feel warmer after drinking alcoholic beverages.
- Avoid overexertion. Cold weather even without physical exertion puts an extra strain on the heart. If you add to this the strain of heavy physical activity, such as shoveling snow, pushing an automobile or even walking too fast or too far, you risk damaging your body.
- Watch for frostbite and other symptoms of cold-weather exposure. Frostbite causes loss of feeling and a white or pale appearance in extremities such as fingers, toes, tip of nose and ear lobes. If such symptoms are detected, get medical attention immediately. Do not rub with snow or ice. This does not help the condition and, in fact, will make it worse. The best treatment for frostbite is re-warming the affected tissue.
- Drink plenty of fluids. Dehydration can be a severe problem.
- Dress warmly in loose-fitting, layered, lightweight clothing. Outer garments should be tightly woven, water repellent and natural wool, if possible.
- Change wet socks and all other wet clothing as quickly as possible to prevent loss of body heat. Wet clothing loses its insulation value and transmits heat rapidly.
- Wear a hat. More than half of body heat is lost through the top of the head.
- Wear mittens that are snug at the wrist. Mittens offer better protection than, gloves which allow your fingers to cool much faster.
- Cover your mouth and nose with a scarf to help protect lungs from cold air.

- If paralyzed persons or infants must go outside in severe weather, they should be checked frequently for signs of frostbite.
- When planning to be around the ice, carry an ice pick and a length of rope with you.

### **Operating Vehicles on the Ice**

- When operating vehicles on ice, keep doors and windows open.
- Do not follow other vehicles closely. The weight creates waves in the ice that may cause breaks.
- Do not operate a vehicle at speeds between 15 and 25 mph- go slower or faster. Between 15-25 mph a vehicle causes the ice to move and may cause the ice to shift and fail.
- Travel slowly at night, so you do not overrun headlights. Watch out for and avoid ice heaves.
- Heavy loads, such as trucks, should be separated by at least 100 feet.
- Cracks on the ice are common, due to thermal contraction. Dry cracks, those that do not go through to the water, can be ignored. Wet cracks, however, indicate that the ice should be twice as thick as clear ice to carry the same load.
- In a large temperature fluctuation (above or equal to 30 degrees) it is a good idea to stay off the ice for at least 24 hours.