



THE COMMONWEALTH OF MASSACHUSETTS
EXECUTIVE OFFICE OF PUBLIC SAFETY



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MEMA REVISITS ICE SAFETY TIPS

FRAMINGHAM, MA - The Massachusetts Emergency Management Agency (MEMA) has reissued information regarding safety precautions to be taken on our lakes, rivers and ponds.

“The tragic and near-tragic events that have taken place over the weekend around the Commonwealth are a grim reminder of the dangers presented by the ice on our lakes, ponds and rivers. With the unusual rising and falling temperatures we have seen this winter, ice conditions on even the smallest pond remain uncertain,” stated MEMA Director Cristine McCombs. “We continue to emphasize the importance of exercising precautions and using common sense.”

Ice Safety Tips

- Never go onto the ice alone. A friend may be able to rescue you or go for help if you fall through the ice.
- Always keep your pets on a leash. If a pet falls through the ice do not attempt to rescue your pet, go for help.
- New ice is usually stronger than old ice. As it ages, the bond between the crystals decays, making it weaker, even if melting has not occurred.
- Beware of ice covered with snow. Snow can insulate ice and keep it strong, but can also insulate it to keep it from freezing. Snow can also hide cracks, weak and open ice.
- Slush is a danger sign, indicating that ice is no longer freezing from the bottom and can be weak or deteriorating.
- Ice formed over flowing water (rivers or lakes containing a large number of springs) is generally 15% weaker.
- Ice seldom freezes or thaws at a uniform rate. It can be one foot thick in one spot and be only one inch thick 10 feet away.
- Reach-Throw-Go. If a companion falls through the ice and you are unable to reach that person from shore, throw them something (rope, jumper cables, tree branch, etc.). If this does not work, go for help before you also become a victim. Get medical assistance for the victim immediately.

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- If you fall in, try not to panic. Turn toward the direction you came from. Place your hands and arms on the unbroken surface, working forward by kicking your feet. Once out, remain lying on the ice (do not stand) and roll away from the hole. Crawl back to your tracks, keeping your weight distributed until you return to solid ice.

By following safety procedures, you can be safe and enjoy the many winter activities offered by the great outdoors.

(Sources: Federal Emergency Management Agency, U.S. Army Cold Regions Research and Engineering Laboratory, Colorado State Parks Department, Minnesota Department of Natural Resources)

The Massachusetts Emergency Management Agency (MEMA) is the state agency responsible for coordinating federal, state, local, voluntary and private resources during emergencies and disasters in the Commonwealth of Massachusetts. MEMA provides leadership to: develop plans for effective response to all hazards, disasters or threats; train emergency personnel to protect the public; provide information to the citizenry; and assist individuals, families, businesses and communities to mitigate against, prepare for, and respond to and recover from emergencies, both natural and man made. For additional information about MEMA and All Hazards Preparedness, go to the MEMA website at www.mass.gov/mema.