

# The Colour of Ice Safety

Every winter I spend here in South Bruce Peninsula, it amazes me the joy that a little frozen water can bring to a community!

Each winter, 25 to 30 Canadians die in ice-related incidents and countless others fall through the ice and have brushes with death. Whether it be a patch of 'ice' you play on or the patch of 'ice' that can cause devastation if you drive over it, ice safety is an important aspect of winter.

Remember the colour of ice is important in ensuring ice safety. The colour of the ice is an indication of its strength. Clear Blue is the strongest. White opaque or snow ice is only half as strong as blue ice and grey ice is unsafe and indicates the presence of water.

If you plan to go on the ice, think about the word BLUE. Bring a friend. Look at the colour and thickness. Use the air in your clothing to float if you fall in. Escape

If the ice is 7 cm or less, STAY OFF! 15 cm can support one or two people walking or skating. If you intend to have a skating party or game, the ice should be a minimum of 20 cm. Snowmobiles necessitate a minimum of 25 cm thickness. If you or your children are playing on the ice, wear a helmet and always supervise your children closely.

Never go onto the ice alone. If you fall through the ice, immediately call for help. Do not climb out where you fell in as the ice is weakest in that area. Use the air trapped in your clothing to get into a floating position on your stomach. Without pushing down, reach forward onto the ice and kick your legs to push your torso onto the ice. When you get onto the ice, don't stand up, crawl or roll away from the open area and retrace your steps. If you are helping someone out of the water, use a stick or rope from shore.

If that is not possible, lay down on the ice to distribute your weight as you help the other person out of the water.

When you have escaped the frigid waters, get warm immediately. If you can, get the wet clothes off and into dry clothes as soon as possible. If you're out in the wilderness, start a fire and try to get warmed up. Even if you feel fine, get medical attention immediately.

One of the most dangerous driving situations is hitting a patch of Black Ice. It is extremely important that everyone have winter tires on their vehicles as soon as the temperatures begin to drop below 7°C. Slow down! Give yourself extra time and be cautious. Never use cruise control in the winter. Look ahead while driving and remember that shaded areas of the roadway and bridges always freeze first. Asphalt in the winter typically looks grey-white in colour. If you see a patch of roadway that is shiny and black, you are likely seeing "Black Ice". Patches of ice are normally 6 meters or less. There is a beginning and an end so don't panic if you hit black ice and never hit your breaks. Take your foot off the gas pedal and coast until you are past the ice.

Whatever it is you and your family do to enjoy the ice this winter, try a little treat while you're outdoors called "White Ice". Collect 8 cups of clean snow or shaved ice, pour 1 can of sweetened condensed milk and 1 tsp of vanilla extract over it. Mix it all together and serve immediately in bowls.

Wishing you and your family the warmest of wishes for a safe winter season on the ice,

Daniel Robinson  
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Town of South Bruce Peninsula