



# Enjoy the ice and stay safe this winter

Ottawa winters are becoming shorter and warmer due to climate change. Did you know that the ice on a river or lake must be six inches thick to support just one person? It needs to be a lot thicker to support more people or a vehicle.

Here are some tips to keep you and others safe around ice this winter:

## Weather and ice conditions

- ✓ If you are not sure if the ice is safe, stay off the ice and choose an indoor/outdoor rink to skate. Visit [Ottawa.ca](https://ottawa.ca) for more information.
- ✓ All ice on rivers, lakes or streams can be risky.
- ✓ Many things affect the thickness of ice, including:
  - » salt from roads
  - » currents and rocks or trees below the surface
  - » changing temperatures
- ✓ Check the ice conditions:
  - ✓ » clear blue ice is strong and the safest
  - ⚠ » white ice is half as strong and can cover up dangers
  - ✗ » grey ice is unsafe, it will not support much weight
- ✓ Monitor the weather. Consistent temperatures below freezing are needed for natural bodies of water to freeze.

## General safety

- ✓ Wear a life jacket, it buys you time if you fall through the ice.
- ✓ Wear a hockey helmet when on the ice to protect your brain.
- ✓ Don't go out onto ice alone or at night.
- ✓ Avoid stormwater management ponds – ice on these ponds is unstable and not safe for recreational activities.
- ✓ Always keep your dog on a leash when near water (rivers, streams or lakes).
- ✓ Visit [lifesavingsociety.com](https://lifesavingsociety.com) to learn more about what you can do if you or someone you are with falls through the ice.



OPH Winter Water Safety | 2024-08-22

