

Ice Thickness Safety Chart

Knowing ice thickness and its safety guidelines can prevent accidents and save lives. This chart provides general recommendations for ice safety, but always use caution, as ice conditions can vary due to weather, water currents, and other factors.

1. Ice Thickness Guidelines

- ☐ Less than 2 inches - Unsafe! Stay off the ice.
- ☐ 4 inches - Safe for walking, ice fishing, and skating.
- ☐ 5-7 inches - Safe for snowmobiles and ATVs.
- ☐ 8-12 inches - Safe for small cars and light trucks.
- ☐ 12+ inches - Safe for medium-sized trucks.
- ☐ Varies - Ice over flowing water (rivers, streams) is always unsafe.
- ☐ Be cautious - Ice near docks, reeds, and pressure cracks may be weak.
- ☐ Snow-covered ice can be deceptive and hide thin spots.

2. Safety Tips for Ice Travel

- ☐ Always check ice thickness before stepping onto frozen water.
- ☐ Wear a life jacket or flotation device while on ice.
- ☐ Carry ice picks and a rope for self-rescue or helping others.
- ☐ Never go alone - always have a buddy.
- ☐ Avoid ice that appears slushy or has visible cracks.
- ☐ Be extra cautious near shorelines, as ice is often weaker.
- ☐ Test ice thickness in multiple spots before proceeding.
- ☐ If ice starts to crack, lie down and distribute your weight evenly.

3. What to Do If You Fall Through Ice

- ☐ Stay calm - don't thrash around.
- ☐ Turn towards the direction you came from (ice is strongest there).
- ☐ Kick your legs while pulling yourself onto the ice.
- ☐ Once out, roll away from the hole to distribute your weight.
- ☐ Get to warm shelter immediately and remove wet clothing.
- ☐ Seek medical attention if signs of hypothermia appear.

4. Helping Someone Who Fell Through Ice

- ☐ Call 911 immediately - time is critical.
- ☐ DO NOT run to the person - this may cause you to fall through as well.
- ☐ Use a rope, ladder, or long branch to reach them from a safe distance.
- ☐ Encourage them to kick their legs and use their arms to climb out.
- ☐ If necessary, lie flat on the ice to distribute your weight while helping.
- ☐ Once rescued, keep them warm and get medical attention immediately.

Ice safety is critical! When in doubt, stay off the ice.