

# DRESSING FOR WINTER'S WORST



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Dressing in layers is the key to staying warm and regulating your body temperature. You can remove and add layers as needed. The clothing you use for other winter activities, such as sledding, skating, or skiing, work well for ice fishing too. Always bring more clothing than you think you will need.

## REMEMBER:

- Wear a hat. Most of your body heat is lost through your head.
- A waterproof and windproof outer layer is ideal for keeping the elements at bay.
- Wool, silk, and fleece are great insulators; they'll keep you warm even if they get wet.
- Also bring: gloves or mittens, sunglasses, insulated and waterproof boots, extra clothing, food and water, and hot drinks.

## ICE SAFETY TIPS

Even if the weather has been below freezing for several days, never guess about ice thickness because it does not form consistently across a water body.

- Test the ice – never assume the ice is safe!
- Always fish with another person.
- New ice is usually stronger than older ice.
- Avoid the shoreline if it is cracked or squishy.
- Wind and currents can make ice unsafe.
- Don't gather in large groups.
- Don't drive vehicles onto the ice.
- Don't build a fire on the ice.
- Bring blankets and a first-aid kit.
- If you fall in, reach for solid ice, kick and roll to safety.



Watch a video about ice safety at [FishNH.com/fishing/ice-fishing.html](http://FishNH.com/fishing/ice-fishing.html)



Before you venture out on a frozen pond or lake, learn more about ice safety, at [FishNH.com/outdoor-recreation/ice-safety.html](http://FishNH.com/outdoor-recreation/ice-safety.html)



New Hampshire Fish and Game Department  
11 Hazen Drive, Concord, NH 03301  
[wildnh.com/outdoor-recreation/ice-safety.html](http://wildnh.com/outdoor-recreation/ice-safety.html)



New Hampshire Fish and Game Department

# SAFETY ON THE ICE

TIPS FOR WINTER ENTHUSIASTS



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# JUDGING ICE CONDITIONS

## LOOK FOR SOLID BLUE-BLACK ICE:

- Four to 6 inches\* of solid blue-black ice can support a few well-dispersed people.
- Eight to 10 inches\* of solid bluish-black ice can support OHRV activity.

Never guess about ice thickness. Ice does not form consistently across a water body because a water body's size, temperature, depth, currents, springs, and wind exposure all affect ice formation. Early season snow cover can insulate ice from cold temperatures and slow ice formation.

## CHECKING THE ICE:

- Use an auger, spud, or chisel to make test holes.
- Check the ice in several places; start at the shore and continue testing as you move out further.

## REMEMBER:

- All ice is potentially dangerous.
- It is possible for ice to be thick but not strong.
- Don't go on the ice during thaws.
- Watch out for thin, clear, or honeycombed ice. Dark snow and ice may also indicate weak spots.
- Ice can remain thin in places where current is present, such as inlets, outlets, and spring holes.
- Choose small bodies of water; they tend to freeze thicker. Rivers and lakes are more prone to wind, current, and wave weakening.

\* Ice thickness recommendations based on information from Cold Regions Research & Engineering Laboratory in Hanover, NH.



*If the ice along the shoreline is cracked or squishy, stay off. Sun-warmed rocks can weaken the surrounding ice.*

## SAFETY GEAR

It's smart to carry safety gear while on the ice so that you can help yourself or others should the need arise. Basic safety gear includes: hand spikes, a whistle, rope, and ice cleats.



# WHAT IF I BREAK THROUGH THE ICE?

1. **Stay calm.**
2. Move or swim back to the place you fell in—where you know the ice was solid.
3. Lay both arms on the unbroken ice and kick hard. This will help lift your body onto the ice. A set of ice picks can aid you in a self-rescue. Wear them around your neck or put them in an easily accessible pocket. If you fall in, the spikes will give you added grip on the ice.
4. Roll away from the hole until you reach solid ice.

# WHAT IF MY BUDDY BREAKS THROUGH THE ICE?

1. **Don't rush over to the hole.** Keep yourself safe so that you are able to help.
2. Look for something you can throw or use to reach out to the person—a rope, branch, or ice spud.
3. Lie down flat and reach out with your extension tool or form a human chain if possible.
4. After securing the person, **don't stand**—wiggle backwards to the solid ice.

The victim may need artificial respiration, CPR, or treatment for hypothermia (cold exposure). Cover the victim with a warm blanket or extra clothing and seek medical assistance immediately.

*"Thick and blue, tried and true;  
Thin and crispy, way too risky."*