



## **ICE SAFETY NOTICE**

With up and down temperatures this winter, the safety of ice on our ponds is certainly questionable. Is pond ice ever safe? The answer is NO. Many factors impact the safety of ice on ponds. Underwater springs, currents, temperature, wind, road run off, debris, vegetation and bird activity can all impact the safety of ice. The only truly safe ice is found at a skating center. In Longmeadow, we do not inspect the ice and do not make any guarantee of its safety. In fact our park rules prohibit activities on the ice in our parks as a safety precaution.

It seems that every winter we read about another tragedy when someone ventures on unsafe ice. Last month our neighbors in Chicopee suffered a devastating loss of two young boys who fell through the ice. We all need to educate ourselves and our children regarding the dangers of being on the ice. If you fall through the chances of self-rescue are very low. The cold water will immediately affect your body and limit your ability to help yourself. If you are with someone who falls through the ice and you attempt to rescue them by going on the ice, you also have a high likelihood of becoming a victim. Here are some tips in the case someone falls through the ice:

If you witness someone **(person or animal)** go through the ice:

**Step One: Call 911**; Get us (FIRE and POLICE) on the way. We are specially equipped and trained to rescue victims who have fallen through the ice. Minutes count!!!!!!!

**Step Two:** Tell the person to remain calm, do not struggle and hold on to the ice. Do not go on the ice and try to grab them. If they stay still and hold on they have the best chance for survival and rescue.

**Step Three:** Using a stick, rope or other object, try to reach for the victim from shore and have them hold on. If the victim has the strength, you can attempt to pull them out. Remember, the cold water greatly reduces one's ability to hold on. Simply securing the victim and waiting for first responders may be the better option.

**Step Four:** If the person goes under the water, make sure you know exactly where they went under. This greatly increases our opportunity to rescue the victim.

### **FAQ:**

*Q: Is falling through the ice a big deal?*

A: It is a very big deal. **Immediately call 911**. Even if the person is out of the water when we arrive, they will need medical attention and treatment for hypothermia.

*Q: What if my dog falls through the ice?*

A: Do not attempt to rescue the dog. **Again call 911**. We will rescue animals who fall through the ice.

*Q: What if I am alone and fall through the ice?*

A: If you fall through ice, it is vital to not panic. Attempt to get help by yelling. Turn toward the direction you came from. Place your hands and arms onto the ice and place your body against the edge of the ice and kick with your legs to push you forward out of the water, onto the ice. If you break through again, keep trying until you are on solid ice. Remain lying down to keep your weight distributed evenly. If you stand up, you could fall back in. Roll away from the hole and crawl back towards the shore. Get medical help immediately.

**Chief Dearborn, Longmeadow Fire Department**  
**January 9, 2020**