



## “Is the ice safe yet?”

One of the most common questions we get this time of year is, “Is the ice safe yet?” Generally, our response is, “Well, yes—from mid-January through February, you can usually expect the lakes and ponds in New Hampshire to be sufficiently frozen to support a great deal of weight and recreation activity.”

However, with that said, we **always** advise folks who are planning to venture out onto a lake or pond that appears to be frozen to follow a few basic ice-safety tips:

**Check it!** Never assume the ice on any water body is thick enough to support your weight. Start at the shoreline, and, using an auger, spud or ax, make test holes at intervals as you proceed away from the shoreline. As a rule of thumb, for new, clear ice, there should be a minimum of four to six inches of ice to support a few, well-dispersed people; six to seven inches for small, on-foot group activities; and at least eight to ten inches for snowmobiles.

**Shoreline ice:** If the ice along the shoreline is cracked or squishy, stay off! Don't go on the ice during thaws. Avoid areas with honeycombed ice, dark snow, or dark ice.

**Moving water:** Ice is generally thinner at inlets and outlets, around docks, bridge abutments, islands, and, objects, such as rocks, that protrude through.

**Know what to do if you do fall through the ice:** Before heading out onto the ice this winter, take a few minutes to watch an unforgettable video produced by The Discovery Channel Canada that will teach you how to survive a fall through the ice—it can happen to anyone and when one least expects it. You can watch this short video on your computer by visiting [www.youtube.com/watch?v=ysnKtuUTt8k](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ysnKtuUTt8k). Also, be sure you read the “Safety on Ice” brochure produced by the New Hampshire Fish and Game Department—download it from their website at [www.wildlife.state.nh.us/outdoor-recreation/documents/ice-safety.pdf](http://www.wildlife.state.nh.us/outdoor-recreation/documents/ice-safety.pdf) or get copy from their Public Affairs Division by calling (603) 271-3211.

**Have a safe and fun time on one of New Hampshire's 1,000 frozen lakes and ponds this winter!** Whether you enjoy walking, snowshoeing, ice skating, cross-country skiing, ice fishing, snowmobiling, or ice sailing out on the ice, by following a few basic safety rules and knowing what to do if disaster strikes, you can have a safe and fun time.



Photo Source: Cobbetts Pond Improvement Association.

NH LAKES is the only statewide, member-supported nonprofit organization working to keep New Hampshire's lakes clean and healthy, now and in the future. The organization works with partners, promotes clean water policies and responsible use, and inspires the public to care for our lakes. For information, visit [www.nhlakes.org](http://www.nhlakes.org), email [info@nhlakes.org](mailto:info@nhlakes.org), or call 603.226.0299.

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