



The Dangers of Frozen Water

With snow and ice affecting the UK, The Royal Life Saving Society UK are urging the public to be aware of the dangers these freezing conditions can pose.

Many aren't aware of the dangers of frozen water; it may look solid from the surface but will not hold your weight and could crack when stood on. The Royal Life Saving Society UK has devised these safety tips about the dangers of frozen waters.

When water is frozen and the cold weather sets in these are a few safety tips to take note of:

1. Teach children not to go on to frozen lakes, ponds, canals and reservoirs under any circumstances. Children and pets are particularly at risk when tempted to play on the ice formed on open water during cold weather.
2. Pets should be kept on leads when near frozen water and owners should refrain from throwing objects onto ice for them to retrieve.
3. Bystanders should shout reassurance to casualties without endangering themselves. Make sure help is on the way by phoning the emergency services (call 999).
4. Do not walk or climb onto the ice to attempt a rescue and certainly don't get into the water, you may become the next casualty.
5. If someone can't climb out of the water, it is not advisable, as many people think, to move about in the water to keep warm while waiting for help. Instead they should conserve their energy by keeping as still as possible.

If you see someone fall through the ice:

1. Shout for assistance; get help also by phoning the emergency services (call 999).
2. Do not walk or climb onto the ice to attempt a rescue.
3. Shout to the casualty to 'keep still' and offer reassurance to keep them calm.
4. Try and reach them from the bank using a rope, pole, tree branch, clothing tied together or anything else which can extend your reach.
5. When reaching from the bank, lie down to avoid being pulled onto the ice – this spreads your weight more evenly.
6. If you cannot reach them, slide something which floats, such as a plastic bottle or football, across the ice for them to hold onto to stay afloat whilst help is on the way.
7. If the casualty is too far away, do not attempt to rescue them. Wait for the emergency services while calming and reassuring the casualty.

If the casualty has been rescued from the ice:

1. Make sure the ambulance is on its way.
2. Lay the casualty flat, check for normal breathing and begin resuscitation if necessary.
3. Prevent them from getting colder by covering them with warm clothing, blankets etc.
4. Get them out of the cold, under cover or create some shelter around them.
5. Until the casualty is in a warm place, do not undress them.
6. Do not rub their skin, do not apply hot water bottles and do not give an alcoholic drink.
7. Keep them wrapped up so they warm up gradually.

If you fall through the ice:

1. Keep calm and shout for 'help'.
2. Spread your arms across the surface of the ice in front of you.
3. If the ice is strong enough, kick your legs to slide onto the ice.
4. Lie flat and pull yourself towards the bank.
5. If the ice breaks, work your way to the bank breaking the ice in front of you away.
6. If you cannot climb out, wait for help and keep as still as possible. Press your arms by your side and keep your legs together. Keep your head clear of the water.
7. Once you are safe, go to hospital immediately for a check up.

It is important to note the first stages of mild hypothermia are shivering and teeth-chattering. Should you notice these symptoms you need to warm up with a combination of warm, dry clothes and activity.

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