

Winter water safety

In winter, children and pets are particularly at risk when tempted to play on the ice formed on open water, and adults can find themselves at risk in attempting to save them.

Taking a nice walk in cold weather with your family, friends or dogs in tow can be really refreshing, just make sure you know some simple tips on how to stay safe in winter.

Here are some useful tips to keep safe this winter:



KEEP BACK FROM THE EDGE

Keep back from slippery banks.

Stick to well-lit areas and plan your walks in daylight or along well-lit paths.

Never go onto the ice.

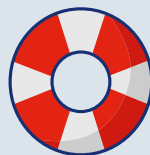


KEEP CHILDREN AND DOGS WITHIN REACH

Teach children not to go onto ice.

Keep dogs on a lead near ice and slippery banks.

If out enjoying a winter walk, walk with friends.



IF YOU'RE IN TROUBLE FLOAT AND CALL FOR HELP.

Stay calm, float on your back and call for help.

Wait for help and keep as still as possible.

Preserve heat by pressing your arms by your side and keep your legs together. Keep your head clear of the water.

Throw something that floats to somebody that has fallen in.



CALL 999

Do not enter cold water or ice to rescue.

Try and reach them from the bank using a rope, pole, tree branch, clothing tied together or anything else which can extend your reach.

Make sure the whole family knows basic water safety and what to do if they find themselves in the water unexpectedly. You can access free RLSS UK resources to help.

Water Safety Near Frozen Water

Areas with frozen lakes, ponds, canals and reservoirs can be beautiful places to visit during the winter months but all too often many people risk their lives by venturing onto frozen water. Don't be fooled by popular movie scenes, ice can be extremely dangerous and across the UK and Ireland is unlikely to freeze to a suitable depth to safely walk on.

What to do 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.
6. If you cannot climb out, wait for help and keep as still as possible. Preserve heat by pressing 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.

What to do if you see someone fall through the ice:

1. Shout for assistance and phone 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.
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.

What to do after 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.

<https://www.rlss.org.uk/pages/category/winter-water-safety>