

PUBLIC SERVICE ANNOUNCEMENT / MESSAGE D'INTÉRÊT PUBLIC

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Think twice before venturing onto the ice!

Ottawa – Even though temperatures have been mild, the Ottawa Drowning Prevention Coalition wants to remind residents that when the temperatures go down awareness of the dangers of being on or around ice and open water needs to go up.

When water begins to freeze on rivers, lakes, the Rideau Canal and other open bodies of water it may look solid but is often still dangerous. If you want to go out onto the ice, remember the thickness should be:

- 15 cm for walking or skating alone
- 20 cm for skating parties or games
- 25 cm for snowmobiles
- 35 cm for fishing huts

As a guideline, clear blue ice is usually the strongest; white opaque or snow ice is half as strong as blue ice. Grey ice is unsafe. The greyness indicates the presence of water.

Water levels this year are higher than usual and are accompanied by soft, slippery banks that are treacherous, particularly for young children, adults and the family pet.

Before venturing onto the ice, check the [Lifesaving Society's](#) guidelines for staying safe, and review guidelines by [The Canadian Red Cross](#) on what to do if you get into trouble on the ice. When in doubt, simply stay away from the ice, period.

Last winter, Ottawa Fire Services, working in close coordination with Ottawa Paramedic Service and Ottawa Police Service, responded to 49 calls for help from persons in distress, lost or feared drowned. All three groups are part of the Ottawa Drowning Prevention Coalition.

The coalition also includes representatives of the City's Parks Recreation and Cultural Services Department, Ottawa Public Health, the Canadian Red Cross, the Lifesaving Society, and local community groups.