

Dept. of Natural Resources: Keep ice safety a top priority during changing winter weather

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MADISON, Wis. – The Department of Natural Resources (DNR) reminds the public that as March’s warmer temperatures and spring showers move in, Wisconsin’s winter ice cover on lakes moves out.

The lake ice that supported vehicles, fishing shelters and snowmobiles becomes more unreliable and dangerous as temperatures fluctuate between above and below freezing.

“Ice thickness changes at an alarming rate,” said Lt. Jacob Holsclaw, DNR Off-Highway Vehicle Administrator. “That could trigger a split-second and possibly fatal dunk for anglers, snowmobilers and other outdoor enthusiasts unless safety steps are followed.”

Here are a few basic [ice safety tips](#) to remember:

- Carry a cell phone, and let people know where you are going and when you’ll return home.
- Wear proper clothing and equipment, including a life jacket or a float coat, to help you stay afloat and to help maintain body heat.
- Wear ice creepers attached to boots to prevent slipping on clear ice.
- Carry a spud bar to check the ice while walking to new areas.
- Carry a few spikes and a length of light rope in an easily accessible pocket to help pull yourself – or others – out of the ice.
- If you fall in, remain as calm as possible. While attempting to get out of the water, call for help. Anyone who attempts to rescue you should use a rope or

something similar to avoid falling through themselves.

- Do not travel in unfamiliar areas or at night.

“Remember to check ice conditions with local sources,” said Holsclaw. “Bait shops, outfitters and other anglers can provide recent information regarding ice conditions. And please remember that driving on late-season ice is a bad idea.”

The fast-approaching spring also signals the time to remove permanent ice shanties off of the ice. Anglers should know their shanty removal deadlines, as some have passed. The remaining ice shanty removal deadlines are:

- Inland waters south of Highway 64 by March 5
- Wisconsin - Michigan boundary waters by March 15
- Lake Michigan, Green Bay, Lake Superior and inland waters north of Highway 64 by March 19

Portable ice shanties can still be used after these dates, so long as they are removed from the ice when they are not actively in use and at the end of each day.