

Friday, March 5, 2021

**PUBLIC SERVICE ANNOUNCEMENT**



**KNOW THE RISKS BEFORE STEPPING ONTO ANY FROZEN WATER**

**Welland, ON** – The Welland Canal is a natural gathering place throughout the whole year; it’s a place for recreation, competitive sport or just to relax by the waterfront. However, oftentimes residents, new and old, forget that it is still active water, especially when there is a layer of ice blanketing the water below. Welland Fire and Emergency Services want to remind all that **No Ice is Safe Ice**.

35% of drownings in Canada take place between late Fall and early Spring, when there was no intention of entering the water. If you fish, snowmobile, ice race, cross country ski, go for walks, or skate on frozen lakes, ponds, or canals, we urge you to know the risks and the important information that can keep you safe or save your life.

**The Facts:**

- Water in Ontario is colder than you think.
- A person can go into cold water shock in less than 1 minute.
- You can only survive a few minutes in cold water.
- Most drownings occur in water less than 20 degrees Celsius.
- No ice is without risk.
- Motorized activities over frozen bodies of water poses a large risk.
  - Repeated passes can unknowingly fracture the ice below

**Ice Safety Tips:**

- Check the ice thickness.
- Colour of ice matters
  - clear blue ice is the strongest
  - White or opaque ice is much weaker, stay away from ice that looks honeycombed, common during thaws or in the spring
- Near-shore ice is often much thicker and safer than ice farther out, especially at the start of the winter season.
- Ice that formed over flowing water, springs, pressure cracks or old ice holes can be weaker than the surrounding ice.
- Wear a lifejacket and survival suit, these items can buy you some time and can preserve body heat.
- If you are going out onto ice, know what to do if you break through.

Visit the Water/Canal Safety – Winter Edition webpage and watch the Welland Fire and Emergency Services team demonstration of life saving tips <https://www.welland.ca/HotTopics/WaterIceSafety.asp>

-30-

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