

No ice is safe ice; know the risks and avoid using the recreational canal and stormwater ponds

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Welland, ON – With ice thawing and water runoff and rain posing a new hazard, the City of Welland reminds everyone to avoid the Welland recreational canal and all stormwater ponds.

When the temperatures drop cold enough in the winter months, the canal freezes; however, the water underneath remains active. Due to the constantly moving water underneath the service, gaps or flooding areas where ice forms make the canal unsafe for recreational activity. Additionally, water runoff weakens the ice and rain adds a risk of melt and water pooling – which may freeze and deceive users.

COVID-restrictions permitting, activities involving skating should take place at arenas or properly maintained outdoor rinks. For City-operated outdoor rinks, check the City's [website](#) for updates. If your winter activities take you onto ice-covered bodies of water, be mindful of areas you explore.

"Avoiding the canal and stormwater ponds in the city is the best way to stay safe this winter," said Adam Eckhart, fire chief. "We understand that many residents will enjoy winter activities that include fishing, snowmobiling, skating, and more on frozen water surfaces, and we encourage everyone to know the risks before venturing out onto the ice."

According to Lifesaving Society, approximately 35 per cent of drownings in Canada occur from October to April when most people have no intention of going into the water. Snowmobiling and ice accidents account for most of these incidents.

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
- Near-shore ice is often much thicker and safer than ice farther out
- No ice is safe, use caution around all of our bodies of water and don't venture out alone'
- Wear a lifejacket and survival suit; these items can preserve body heat
- If you are going out onto the ice, know what to do if you break through

To stay safe, check the ice to make sure it's thick enough and always wear a lifejacket during activities around the water. When in doubt, stay clear of the ice.

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