

# Winter Water Safety

**Please see the following winter water safety information from North Kesteven District Council**

Given the continued deep freeze and following on from the tragic circumstances in Solihull in recent days, in association with our community partners we would appreciate it if you are able to share some advice about winter safety as you break up for Christmas. There is a particular emphasis on asking children to stay away from chilly and frozen lakes and ponds.

The following has been issued by Danny Moss, area manager for prevention and protection at Lincolnshire Fire and Rescue.

He said:

*“The tragic incident in Solihull shows just how dangerous open water can be. Even during the summer months, entering lakes and rivers can cause the body to go into shock. In the winter with freezing temperatures, we would urge people to please stay away from frozen lakes and ponds. Even if they look strong enough to take your weight, they might not be.*

*“Never enter the water if you see someone struggling, as you are likely to get into trouble as well. This also applies to dogs or other animals who may have fallen into water.*

*“Call the emergency services and remain calm, and give as much information as you can to the call handler.*

*“Lastly, we would ask parents to always know where your children are playing and remind them about the dangers of frozen lakes and ponds.”*

There is further detailed information at the Royal Life Saving Society's website - <https://www.rlss.org.uk/winter-water-safety> - including the attached leaflet and colouring in sheets.

The Top Tips are these:

## **Teach children not to go on the ice**

Teach children not to go onto the ice under any circumstances.

## **Don't go on the ice to rescue a dog**

Don't go onto ice or into the water to rescue a dog, move to somewhere that the dog will be able to climb out and call them towards you.

### **Keep dogs on their leads**

Keep dogs on their leads when near ice and don't throw sticks or toys onto the ice.

### **Only use well lit areas**

Time your walks to make the most of the daylight; if you need to walk in the evening only use well-lit areas or take a route not alongside water.

### **Keep back from the edge**

When walking alongside water keep back from the edge.

**And the following may be of particular interest to parents:**

### **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 anyway
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

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

1. Shout for assistance and phone the emergency services – call 999 or 112
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

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### **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