

ENFORCEMENT BRANCH



Anglers Encouraged To Stay Safe On The Ice

The Ministry of Natural Resources is reminding anglers to check local ice conditions before heading out onto the ice to fish.

Conditions Can Be Deceptive And Variable

Please Remember:

Ice does not freeze at a uniform thickness across most lakes and rivers. This can be particularly evident at the start of the winter season when near-shore ice is often much thicker and safer than ice further out. Check thickness regularly with a spud bar or auger as you move further out on the ice.

Not all ice is created equal. Ice that has formed over flowing water, springs, pressure cracks, old ice holes or around the mouths of rivers and streams can be weaker than surrounding ice.

Clear blue ice is the strongest. White or opaque ice is much weaker. Ice that has a honeycombed look, common during thaws or in the spring, should be avoided altogether.

Traveling on frozen lakes or rivers with snowmobiles or vehicles can be particularly dangerous and added precautions must be taken. At least 20 centimetres (eight inches) of clear blue ice is required for snowmobiles and 30 centimetres (12 inches) or more is needed for most light vehicles. This thickness should be doubled if the ice is white or opaque.

Heavy snow on a frozen lake or river can insulate the ice below and slow down the freezing process.

Before Venturing Out:

- Register your ice hut. Contact your [local ministry office](#) for registration requirements.
- Check conditions with local ice hut operators.
- Let others know where you're planning to fish and when you plan to return.
- Appropriate clothing and equipment are critical to safety and comfort.
- Many anglers wear floater suits and carry a set of ice picks.