



# Lake George Association

*People Protecting the Lake Since 1885*

## NEWS RELEASE

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### For IMMEDIATE RELEASE

## LGA ISSUES ICE SAFETY TIPS, URGES CAUTION

**Lake George, NY – January 4, 2011** The Lake George Association has published its 2011 Ice Recreation Safety Tips. People who plan to venture out on Lake George ice this winter are urged to follow these tips. Area hotels are asked to post and distribute them. Pressure ridges and areas of weak ice present dangerous hazards to those unfamiliar with the Lake.

According to Walt Lender, LGA’s executive director, “Most of the winter emergencies on the Lake are due to complacency. Before heading out, we urge everyone to follow these safety guidelines.”

### ICE SAFETY TIPS TO LIVE BY

- Always check the ice before you go out on it. Use an ice auger, ice pick, spud bar or a cordless drill to make holes. New, clear, bluish-black ice is stronger than ice that is white or bubble-filled. The thickness guidelines listed below from several organizations are for new, clear ice. These guidelines must be doubled for white ice.

<b>MINIMUM ICE THICKNESS for New, Clear Ice – in inches</b>					
	NYS DEC	US Army Corps of Engineers	PA Fish & Boat Commission	NH Fish & Game Dept.	Minnesota Dept. of Natural Resources
1 person on foot	3 - 4	2	4	4	4
Group (single file)	3 - 4	3	7	6	N/A
Snowmobile or ATV	N/A	3	5	N/A	5
1 car (2 tons)	N/A	7	8	7.5	8 - 12
Light truck (2.5 tons)	N/A	8	11	8 - 12	8 - 12
Truck (3.5 tons)	N/A	9	N/A	12 - 15	12 - 15

- Ice does not form uniformly. If ice along the shore is cracked, stay off. Lake George has sub-surface currents that also make the thickness of the ice variable.
- Avoid ice that is honeycombed or piled up.
- Ice is thinner near running water. Avoid shoreline areas near stream channels or ice eaters on docks.
- Stay away from shoals and other underwater hazards as the ice above them is thinner.
- Once on the ice, do not congregate in large groups, build a fire, or drive a large vehicle out on the ice.

- When snowmobiling at night, don't "out-drive" your headlight. Give yourself time to spot and avoid open water, pressure ridges and patches of weak ice.
- Do not drink. Alcohol increases your chances for hypothermia, impairs your judgment and slows your reaction time.

### **What to bring:**

- Another person. Never go out on the ice alone. Keep a good distance apart as you move about.
- Dress in layers, with a hat and gloves. Wool and fleece are great insulators. Wear a wind- and water-proof outer layer. Top it all off with a Personal Flotation Device.
- A length of rope, a pair of ice picks, or a pair of screwdrivers tied together with a few feet of strong cord. You can use these to pull yourself up and onto the ice. Wooden handles are best because they will float if you drop them.
- Your cell phone in case of emergency.
- A sled (instead of a backpack) if you are bringing along heavy gear. (A sled will help to distribute the weight more evenly across the ice.)

### **If you fall through:**

- Try not to panic. Call out for help only if you see someone. The cold shock that makes you hyperventilate will subside within 1-3 minutes. Get your breathing under control and stay above water. You are more likely to die from drowning than hypothermia.
- Remove any extraneous objects that will weigh you down. (skis, snowmobile helmet, skates, etc.)
- Try to get out from the direction that you came in. Place your hands and arms on the unbroken surface of the ice.
- Begin kicking your feet to get your body horizontal. Then, pull yourself along the ice until you are out of the hole. Be slow and deliberate to conserve your strength and body heat.
- If the ice breaks, move forward and try again.
- Once you are lying on the ice, DO NOT stand up. Roll away from the hole, then crawl following your footsteps back toward shore. Don't stand until the hole is well behind you. You want to distribute your weight evenly over a wide area to prevent going through again.
- If you can't pull yourself out within 10 minutes from the time that you went in, cease all attempts. At this point, you need to extend the time period in which someone else could rescue you by conserving body heat. The body loses heat much faster in water than it does in air, so get as much of your body out of the water as possible. Keep your forearms flat and still on the ice. Hopefully, your clothing will freeze to the ice, possibly preventing you from going under, even if you become unconscious. It is possible to survive for up to two hours before succumbing to hypothermia. In other words, if you stay composed and keep above water, you have almost a two-hour window of opportunity to be rescued.

### **If someone else falls through:**

- If you are on the ice, DO NOT run up to the hole.
- If you are on shore, DO NOT run onto the ice.
- Try to keep the victim calm.
- Call 911.
- Look for people nearby who can help.
- Use an item on shore to throw or extend to the victim that will allow you to pull them out of the water. (Rope, ladder, branch, extension cord, skis, jumper cable, etc.) You can also form a human chain with people lying flat on the ice to distribute the weight as evenly as possible.
- Once the victim is safely on shore, they may seem to be in relatively good condition. However, a potentially fatal condition called "after drop" can occur soon afterward. Cold blood that has been pooled in the body's extremities starts to circulate again as the body warms up. At this point, the body begins to shiver violently in an attempt to raise the temperature again.
- Never rub the victim's arms, hands, legs or feet, as this could cause or exacerbate the "after drop."
- Never give the victim alcohol or caffeine. They restrict blood vessels and slow circulation.

- If possible, exchange wet clothes for dry clothes, wrap the victim in a blanket and get the victim out of the elements.

The Association would also like to remind the public to remember to remove any debris or garbage created out on the Lake ice, as once the ice melts, it will sink into the water.

The LGA is a not-for-profit membership organization of people interested in working together to protect, conserve, and improve the beauty and quality of the Lake George Basin. Contact the LGA at (518) 668-3558 or visit the LGA's website at [www.lakegeorgeassociation.org](http://www.lakegeorgeassociation.org).

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**Photo caption one:** The Lake George Association urges the public to avoid fishing or other recreational activities on Lake George ice when conditions are risky, like those pictured here.

**Photo caption two:** Ice on Lake George does not form uniformly, as seen in this aerial picture. Sub-surface currents, underwater hazards, and ice-eaters near docks all contribute to unpredictability in the thickness of the ice on Lake George. The public is urged to exercise caution.