

## ***Outdoor Winter Safety***

### **Facts**

- Last winter, five people died when they fell through the ice.
- Over the last 10 years, 63 people have drowned after breaking through thin ice.
- Sixty-five percent of all ice drownings are vehicle related.
- Several children die almost every year in ice-related accidents.
- Last winter, 17 people died in snowmobile accidents.
- Last winter, many snowmobile deaths were alcohol or drug related.
- Hypothermia and frostbite can quickly become life- or limb-threatening.

### **Safe Behavior**

- Never walk on ice less than four inches thick. Don't snowmobile on less than five inches or drive your car on less than eight inches of new, clear ice.
- Warn your children to stay away from ice-covered ponds and streams.
- Avoid alcoholic beverages, especially when snowmobiling. Alcohol causes the body to lose heat more rapidly, even though one may feel warmer after drinking alcoholic beverages.
- Avoid overexertion. Cold weather even without physical exertion, puts an extra strain on the heart. If you add to this the strain of heavy physical activity, such as shoveling snow, pushing an automobile or even walking too fast or too far, you risk damaging your body.
- Watch for frostbite and other symptoms of cold-weather exposure. Frostbite causes loss of feeling and a white or pale appearance in extremities such as fingers, toes, tip of nose and ear lobes. If such symptoms are detected, get medical attention immediately. Do not rub with snow or ice. This does not help the condition and, in fact, will make it worse. The best treatment for frostbite is rewarming the affected tissue.
- Drink plenty of fluids. Dehydration can be a severe problem.
- Keep yourself and your clothes dry. Change wet socks and all other wet clothing as quickly as possible to prevent loss of body heat. Wet clothing loses its insulation value and transmits heat rapidly.
- If paralyzed persons or infants must go outside in severe weather, they should be checked frequently for signs of frostbite.

### **Winter Attire**

- Dress warmly in loose-fitting, layered, lightweight clothing. Outer garments should be tightly woven, water repellent and natural wool, if possible.
- Wear a hat. More than half of body heat is lost through the top of the head.
- Wear mittens that are snug at the wrist. Mittens offer better protection than, gloves which allow your fingers to cool much faster.
- Cover your mouth and nose with a scarf to help protect lungs from cold air.
- Attempt to keep your feet as dry as possible. Wear wool socks.