



# WINTER HAZARD AWARENESS WEEK

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## WINTER SAFETY CHECKLIST: OUTDOOR SPORTS AND ACTIVITIES

### IN GENERAL

- Check the weather forecasts. Winter weather can change quickly, so be prepared for anything. Carry backup clothing and supplies.
- Use the proper equipment. Be sure everything is in proper working condition before leaving home.
- Wear the proper attire. Use clothing and gear designed for the activity. Don't wear loose items that can be snagged or caught in equipment or machinery.
- Wear a helmet designed specifically for the activity.
- Stay focused; commit 100 percent of your attention on the activity and the terrain. Rest when you are tired. Hydrate often.
- Avoid alcohol. Don't drink before or during any outdoor activity. Alcohol cools the blood and decreases body temperature. In cold weather conditions, alcohol can speed the process of frostbite or hypothermia. It increases fatigue and causes impaired judgment.



### SNOWMOBILING

- Slow down. Speed is a factor in nearly all fatal snowmobiling accidents. Allow ample reaction time for any situation. Drive at moderate speeds — and drive defensively, especially after sunset.
- Don't drink and drive. A snowmobile is a powerful motor vehicle, like any other. Drive responsibly.
- Carry an emergency kit. Your kit should include an emergency blanket, first-aid, flashlight, knife, compass, map, whistle, and waterproof matches. It's also wise to carry water and food.
- Dress appropriately. Always wear a helmet with goggles or a face shield. Wear layers of water repellent clothing with no loose ends that might catch or tangle in equipment or machinery.
- Stay on marked trails. Where allowed, stay on the right shoulder of the road. Watch for fences, tree stumps and stretched wire hidden by snow.
- Avoid traveling across bodies of water when you are uncertain of ice thickness or water currents. Changing weather can affect the thickness and strength of ice on lakes and ponds; snow cover, for instance, can act as a blanket and prevent thick, strong ice from forming.
- Have a map or GPS. Know where you are and where you are going. Keep a charged cell phone handy.
- Never travel alone. Most snowmobile accidents result in personal injury. The most dangerous situations occur when a person is injured and alone. If you must travel alone, tell someone your destination, planned route, and when you will arrive or return.



## SKIING AND SNOWBOARDING

- Stay on runs that are appropriate for your level of ability. Ski-run ratings can vary dramatically by area.
- Ski or snowboard in control at all times; maintain the ability to stop to avoid people or objects.
- Obey all posted signs and warnings. Do not cross ski area boundary lines.
- Do not ski or snowboard alone. Stay where others can see you in case you need assistance.
- Wear a helmet. Most ski areas require them; some rent them. Use goggles rather than sunglasses.
- Report safety hazards. Alert the local ski patrol about any dangerous activity or hazards.
- Take breaks, stay well hydrated, and don't forget to eat. Avoid alcohol. Don't overdo it.

## SLEDDING

- Never use streets or roads unless they closed from traffic.
- Never sled on icy hills. You can lose control easily.
- Avoid big snow bumps or anything that can cause a sled to become airborne.
- Avoid sledding directly into wooded areas, onto ice or into water.
- Be aware of sledders at the bottom and those returning up the hill. Wait until the run is clear before starting.



## ICE SKATING ON PONDS OR LAKES

- Skate in areas that have been approved and posted for ice skating.
- Avoid skating alone; stay where others can see you. Children should never skate unsupervised by adults.
- Remember that ice thickness is never consistent on lakes and ponds, and always beware of thin areas.
- Avoid cracks, seams, pressure ridges, slushy areas and darker areas that signify thinner ice. If the ice doesn't look safe — it probably isn't.
- Never skate after dark in unlighted areas.