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Killam / Forestburg RCMP encourages everyone to exercise caution on frozen lakes and ponds this winter

Killam / Forestburg, Alta. – When it comes to outdoor winter activities, ice safety is essential, especially when the weather fluctuates between extreme cold and warmer periods. Ice conditions can change rapidly, and these changes can be dangerous.

Killam / Forestburg RCMP offer these important tips to help ensure safety when venturing out onto ice covered ponds or lakes:

- Always check the thickness of the ice before venturing onto it. As a general rule, ice should be at least 20 cm (8 in) thick for walking or 25 cm (10 in) for snowmobiles.
- Use a tape measure, drill, or auger to make sure the ice is thick enough and check in multiple locations because ice can vary in thickness.
- Pay attention to fluctuating temperatures. Even if ice appears thick, warming weather can cause it to weaken. In early winter, ice may not be as strong due to variations in temperature, so caution is crucial.
- Stay away from cracks, pressure ridges, or areas with moving water, as these zones can compromise the integrity of the ice.
- If you're near a river or stream, be extra cautious, as moving water under the ice can erode it more quickly, creating dangerous spots that may not be visible.
- When skating on outdoor rinks or ponds, ensure the area has been properly tested for safety.
- Educate children about the dangers of venturing onto ice that isn't officially designated for skating. Unsupervised areas can be especially risky.
- Never go out on ice at night and never go alone.
- Carry a rope or throw line, and know how to use it in case of an emergency.
- If temperatures have recently fluctuated, or the ice has visible cracks or slush on top, avoid it altogether.
- After a warming period, refrain from going onto ice in the early morning or late evening, as it may be weaker.

Follow us on Facebook @RCMPinAlberta and on X @RCMPALberta as we are #StockingUpOnSafety this holiday season.

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