

Stay off the ice to save your life says Water Safety Scotland

Stay off the ice to save your life, that's the message from [Water Safety Scotland \(WSS\)](#) ahead of the colder months.

The message comes as temperatures in the region have plummeted in recent days meaning some bodies of water like lochs have frozen over. While frozen waters can provide youngsters a tempting place to play, and walkers with a picturesque view, they can be deadly.

The warning comes after high profile tragedy in Birmingham in 2022 when four young boys died after walking on a lake and falling into icy waters.

WSS has a wealth of [free water safety resources](#) on its website, which can be accessed by the public, schools and businesses. These include downloadable posters, leaflets and social media assets. Schools and colleges are encouraged to explore and use the [ice-safety workshop](#), suitable for people of all ages.

Carlene McAvoy, from WSS, said:

"The great outdoors is beautiful in winter, but we want to ensure people enjoy it in a safe and informed way by knowing about the dangers of ice.

"Frozen water can be tempting to walk on, but there is just no way of knowing whether it will hold your weight or how deep the water is beneath.

"We urge people to keep themselves and their children away from frozen water, and if dog-walking, to always keep your pet on a lead. Tragically, many past incidents have involved attempted rescues of another person or dog in trouble on frozen water."

This is the key advice from WSS:

- Most importantly, **stay off the ice**. Never be tempted to venture onto ice – you have no way of knowing how thick it is and how cold and deep the water beneath is. The water beneath could also be fast-flowing. Don't ever risk it.
- Keep a **safe distance from the edge**. Fallen leaves or snow could obscure the water's true boundary.
- **Check for safety signage**. This can help inform you of hazards in that area you may not be aware of.
- **Always supervise children**. Just a moment's distraction could have serious consequences for a curious child.
- **Keep dogs on leads**. Otherwise they could end up on the ice and in danger. Also don't throw sticks and balls for dogs near ice.

If you do encounter someone who has fallen through ice:

- Call 999 and request the assistance of the emergency services
- Remain calm and give clear, accurate information about the situation and location
- Do not attempt to go out onto the ice yourself.

Carlene continued:

"To support communities to share and display this advice in their local areas, perhaps in areas known as 'hot-spots' for ice, WSS has developed ice safety resources such as posters, a leaflet and social media assets which are available from the WSS website to download and use. These are free of charge and available to everyone."

Scottish Fire and Rescue Service Station Commander James Sullivan added:

"Every year our operational crews are called to assist people who have got into difficulty after venturing onto frozen water.

"The truth is that it is never a good idea to walk onto frozen water - especially with children.

"It's also important for dog owners to avoid throwing sticks or balls near ice.

"If your pet does get into trouble on the ice, do not attempt a rescue yourself– dial 999 and try to remain calm while providing accurate information to our highly trained Operations Control staff."

WSS would like to encourage those wishing to access these resources to [follow this link](#) to download these resources to get those key messages about ice safety out to members of the public this winter.

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Notes to Editor(s):

[Water Safety Scotland, set up by RoSPA](#), is an influential association of organisations and individuals that works with the Government to influence and coordinate the aims set out in Scotland's Drowning Prevention Strategy and Ministerial Water Safety Action Plan. Our vision is to reduce deaths and accidents in and around water by having a clear, consistent approach to the prevention of water-related fatalities.

[RoSPA](#) is a leading voice in health and safety that campaigns to reduce avoidable accidents. Our vision is to create a life free from accidental injury, and with the support of our members, this is at the core of everything we do. We lobby Government on issues that matter, pioneer the world's largest health and safety awards and provide a suite of RoSPA qualifications that help learners and employers keep their colleagues safe from accidents and ill-health.