

Warning to stay off ice at Tahoe

During this time of year in Lake Tahoe, ice may appear thick enough to walk on, but the thickness is unreliable.

At local areas such as Lakeview Commons and Ski Run Marina, several individuals have ventured out onto the ice. This can be dangerous and deadly if someone breaks through.

South Lake Tahoe firefighters warn that lake ice is most fragile in frozen areas around an open patch and along the shore; and urge people to avoid rivers and lake shorelines, where even ice that looks solid is weak.

Safety tips:

- Ice is never 100 percent safe: the best advice is to stay off of it.

If you do venture onto the ice, remember:

- Check the weather and avoid ice-related activities on warm or stormy days.
- Check ice conditions with knowledgeable local individuals and obey all ice warning signs.
- Keep away from unfamiliar paths or unknown ice, and avoid traveling on ice at night.
- Never go onto the ice alone. A buddy may be able to rescue you or go for help if you get into difficulty.
- Before you leave shore, inform someone of your destination and expected time of return.
- A thermal protection buoyant suit will increase your chances of survival if you do go through the ice. If you do

not have one, wear a lifejacket/personal flotation device (PFD) over an ordinary snowmobile suit or layered winter clothing.

- Assemble a small personal safety kit, no larger than the size of a man's wallet, to carry on your person. The kit should include a lighter, waterproof matches, or magnesium fire starter, pocketknife, compass and whistle.

- In addition to the above safety equipment, you should also carry ice picks, an ice staff and rope. A cellular phone could also help save your life.

- Insist that children, if they do play on ice, are always under adult supervision. Children not within arm's reach have ventured too far.