

working together...

**KIDSAFE** alberta  
...preventing injuries

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## Did you know?

- > Snowboarding is one of the most popular and fastest growing winter sports.
- > Sledding activities can lead to injuries and even result in death.
- > Thick ice is not necessarily safe ice.

# Winter Safety

Before the first snowflakes of winter have even touched the ground, children and teens of all ages are anticipating their winter activities. Keeping active during the winter months can be fun and invigorating. Activities in the winter season include:

- Sledding,
- Skating,
- Downhill Skiing, and
- Snowboarding.

Awareness of cold weather and thin ice is also important during this season.

**Proper supervision, safe environments, hazard awareness, and participating in age-appropriate activities all help reduce the risk of injury to children and teens participating in winter activities.**

[Learn more... >](#)

# Managing the Risks ...

To help manage risks during winter activities: Look First, Wear the Gear, Get Trained, and Drive Sober.

## General Winter Safety Tips

### Look First

- Check weather forecasts to anticipate clothing needs throughout the day.
- Choose play areas with warm shelters nearby.

### Wear the Gear

- Dress in layers of clothing, with an outer layer that is windproof and waterproof.
- Wear a hat keeping ears covered, wear mittens instead of gloves, and wear warm, waterproof boots.
- Wear neck warmers instead of scarves and remove drawstrings from clothing.

### Get Trained

- Snow forts can be fun but building tunnels can be dangerous. Tunnels may collapse and suffocate a child.
- Monitor children for wet clothes, chilling, frostbite, and fatigue.
- Teach children the signs of frostbite and hypothermia as well as the importance of dressing warmly.

## Skating

### Look First

- When skating on natural bodies of water (dugouts, lakes, etc.), make sure the ice is thick enough to be safe.
- Warm up and stretch before skating.

### Wear the Gear

- Wear an appropriate helmet (CSA approved hockey helmet).

## Thin Ice

### Look First

- Check to make sure the ice is smooth and at least 10 cm (4 in) thick. Check with local authorities for information on ice thickness.
- Obey signs posted on or near the ice.
- Avoid walking on ice that is on or near moving water.
- Make sure children only play on or near ice when a responsible adult is supervising.
- Use the buddy system – never walk on ice when alone.
- In spring weather, thick ice is not necessarily safe.
- If in doubt, do not go on the ice.

### Get Trained

- Teach children what to do if they hear the ice crack –
  1. Lay down on the ice.
  2. Crawl or roll back to land.
- Teach children to call for help loudly and clearly if they are in trouble.

Attempting to rescue someone from the ice can result in two victims instead of one. Instead of attempting to pull out a victim yourself, help them rescue themselves.

1. Phone 911 for help.
2. Call out the self rescue steps to the victim:
  - > Lay down on the ice.
  - > Crawl or roll back to land.
3. Push or throw something to the victim that they can use to get out of the water or to float on until expert help arrives.

**REMEMBER...**  
**REACH, THROW, BUT DON'T GO!**

## Sledding

### Look First

- Only sled when temperatures are above -19° C. Take into consideration the wind chill factor when sledding.
- Choose hills with a gentle slope and long run off area.
- Sled on snowy hills, avoid icy surfaces.
- Be sure the hill is free of jumps, bumps, holes, and obstacles.
- Stay away from roads, rivers, railways, and parking lots.
- Only sled in the daylight or on well lit hills.
- Children should be actively supervised by a responsible adult and children under five should have a responsible adult on the sled with them.

### Wear the Gear

- Wear an appropriate helmet (such as a bike or ski helmet).

### Get Trained

- Go down the hill sitting up or kneeling on the sled – never go head first!
- Keep your arms and legs within the sled.
- Move quickly out of the way of others and walk up the side of the hill.
- Know your limits. Rest if you are tired and go inside if you are cold.

## Downhill Skiing/Snowboarding

### Look First

- Make sure your equipment is properly fitted and well maintained.
- Make sure equipment suits your skill level and size.
- Lubricate and adjust bindings each season.
- Warm up and stretch before skiing or snowboarding.
- Never ski or snowboard alone.

### Wear The Gear

- Wear a ski or snowboard helmet that has side vents and meets safety standards (CSA Z263.1-2008, ASTM F2040, CEN 1077, Snell RS-98 or S-98). Consult a reputable skiing/snowboarding shop for more information on the most appropriate helmet.
- Wear wrist guards when snowboarding.
- Wear sunscreen to protect exposed skin and ski goggles or sunglasses to protect your eyes.

### Get Trained

- Enrol in ski or snowboarding lessons with a certified instructor.
- Ski and snowboard on runs that are appropriate for your ability.
- Know your limits. Rest if you are tired and go inside if you are cold.
- Follow the Skier & Snowboarder Responsibility Code.

### Drive Sober

- Never use alcohol or drugs while participating in skiing or snowboarding activities.

Manage the risks...

- > look first,
- > wear the gear,
- > get trained,
- > buckle up, and
- > drive sober.