

NEWS RELEASE
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
December 9, 2020

Albertans urged to stay off thin ice

Alberta Blue Cross is reminding Albertans to stay off thin ice, given the unseasonably warm winter we have had so far. The reminder comes after a 63-year-old man tragically lost his life at Jackfish Lake, west of Edmonton, on November 27 after a side-by-side he was using to clear snow for a skating rink broke through the lake ice.

“Even though we’re well into December, for many locations across the province, ice is not thick enough yet to bear the weight of quads, snowmobiles or side-by-sides—and in some cases may not even be thick enough to bear the weight of an individual on foot,” says Sharmin Hislop, Director of Corporate Communications with Alberta Blue Cross.

Frozen bodies of water offer great opportunities for socially distanced outdoor winter recreation, such as ice fishing, snowshoeing, snowmobiling, skating and cross-country skiing. But no ice surface is without risks.

The recommended minimum depth for activities on new, clear, hard ice is

- 15 cm for walking or skating alone,
- 20 cm for skating groups or games, and
- 25 cm for snowmobiles.

“The Canadian Red Cross stresses that ice thickness can be affected by many factors including underwater springs or currents, air and water temperature and type, location, depth and size of the body of water,” says Hislop.

Albertans should use caution and stay off stormwater drainage ponds, which are an attractive amenity in many newer neighbourhoods but may have water flowing underneath that can dangerously reduce ice thickness levels. And parents need to be especially vigilant to ensure their children don’t venture out onto thin ice, including dugouts on farms.

For information on what to do if you or someone else gets in trouble on ice, visit the Canadian Red Cross at <https://www.redcross.ca/training-and-certification/swimming-and-water-safety-tips-and-resources/swimming-boating-and-water-safety-tips/ice-safety>.

As the province’s largest health benefit provider, Alberta Blue Cross is committed to promoting the health and wellness of Albertans and is a supporter of the Alberta Injury Prevention Centre’s Preventable campaign.

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For more information, please contact Sharmin Hislop, Director, Corporate Communications, Alberta Blue Cross, at 780-498-8283 or shislop@ab.bluecross.ca.

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