

## INTERPRETIVE ACTIVITY OUTLINE

**TOPIC/SUBJECT:** Water Safety

**TITLE:** Ice Safety Program

**FORMAT:** This interpretive program includes an ice bath, skits and a winter safety quiz.

**TARGET AUDIENCE/AGE LEVEL:** K – GR. 4

**LENGTH OF PROGRAM:** 30 - 45 mins.

**THEME:** Outdoor winter activities can be risky near frozen lakes and rivers.

**GOAL/PURPOSE:** The goal of the Ice Safety Program is to raise children's awareness of potential risks associated with winter activities near or on local water bodies.

**OBJECTIVES:** Following the program students should remember:

1. Know safe ice thickness for walking, fishing, snowmobiles and vehicles.
2. Dress in layers to prevent overexposure to weather conditions.
3. Stay safe by getting help if someone falls through the ice.

### **DESCRIPTION:**

#### **Introduction:**

This program is an extension of our summer water safety program. It is held in a large room such as a cafeteria or gymnasium. A group of under 100 is most ideal. 2 tables are set up with an ice bath, towels and display boards. The ice bath consists of a plastic tub filled with ice and water. Students and adults are encouraged to dip their hand into the ice bath for approximately 1 minute to remind them of how cold they become when they fall through a hole in the ice. The ice bath is set up for the entire program with 5 students dipping their hands at one time. This can cause a bit of distraction but has been found to be a valuable learning tool. Often, it is ideal to ask the school principal to "test the ice bath first".

This instantly draws the kids' attention.

As students are called up for the ice bath, the main program begins.

## **Main body:**

**3 Sections (Ice Depth, Hazards, Emergency Scenario Skits)**

**Ice Depth** Leader will ask entire group questions, students raise hands and leader will pick one to answer and then add brief follow up statement after correct answer is given.

**Leader: What outdoor winter activities do you like?**

**Students reply: Sliding, Hockey, Snowboarding, Ice Fishing.**

**Leader: We will find out what ice thickness is safe for your favorite activity and how that is determined.**

**First, how thick must ice be for you to safely walk on it?**

**(students will raise hands with many answers)**

**Correct answer: 4 ins.**

**This must be determined to be safe every day as winter weather fluctuates.**

**Leader: How thick must ice be for safe snowmobiling?**

**(students will raise hands with many answers)**

**Correct answer: 5 ins.**

**The conditions must be checked before snowmobiling.**

**Leader: How thick must ice be to safely drive a car or small truck on it?**

**(students will raise hands with many answers)**

**Correct answer: 8-12 ins.**

**Beware of conditions and stay away from areas where cars are driving on ice.**

**This will weaken the ice and increase risk.**

**Leader: How thick should ice be for a medium truck to drive on it?**

**(students will raise hands with many answers)**

**Correct answer: 12-15 ins.**

**Trucks are a favorite for visitors to recreational areas.**

**Leader: Has anyone ever seen the “Ice Truckers” program and know how thick ice must be for them to drive safely?**

**(students will raise hands with many answers)**

**Correct answer: 24 ins.**

**This is a very risky activity that we would caution against.**

**Thank you for answering these questions, you will now know how to stay safe near ice.**

**Hazards** Leader will share information about what to do when falling through ice and a short session (age appropriate) on frostbite and hypothermia. A photo display is available for further information.

**Leader:** If you are out on a frozen pond, lake or river and fall through the ice what is going to be most important until you are rescued?

(students will offer many answers)

It will be important to remain calm, and keep your arms and head up out of the water. This will help prevent drowning if you are waiting awhile and may become tired or unconscious.

(Students are asked to hold up their arms for a few minutes, shoulder high as if immersed in ice water. Their arms become very tired and it helps to see who is paying attention).

**Leader:** One risk that may be faced when overexposed could be frostbite.

Can anyone tell me what frostbite is?

(Students may offer answers that are helpful)

**Leader:** Frostbite occurs when cold temperatures reduce circulation in hands, feet or other exposed skin. This can cause numbness or discoloration. Often, this will require medical care.

Another risk if not properly dressed outdoors is hypothermia.

Has anyone ever heard of this problem?

(Students will offer many answers)

**Leader:** Hypothermia is the result of the body's core temperature going down. It can cause one to be drowsy, shiver, or even become unconscious. Medical attention is needed at once.

**Emergency Scenario Skits** Leader will choose one or more skits to reinforce points already focused upon. The skits take about 5 - 10 minutes each depending upon age of students, and unpredictable factors. Typically 1 or 2 skits are done with 3 student volunteers and 1 adult volunteer. Leader chooses volunteers and assigns role, narrates as students act out skit.

### **Skit #1 “Loose Dog”**

Leader chooses 2 students to be out walking their dog, (played by 3<sup>rd</sup> student). Students walk dog around room on leash ( they hold hands to simulate this) dog gets loose and runs off, falling through hole in ice (student runs to towel on floor and sits down, begins to bark with the paws up).

1<sup>st</sup> student runs after dog and also falls in (sits on towel with hands up out of water). 2<sup>nd</sup> student views scene, thinking about the danger, runs off to call 911 (student runs over to doorway and pretends to call 911).

Leader encourages entire group to hold their arms up again like the student in the ice hole. Luckily, the student returns with a rescue squad (played by teacher volunteer) who safely rescues student from hole with throw-rope, as the dog has climbed out and run home. Students are wrapped up in blankets and skit ends. Leader: Thank you for helping with this skit. It is important to remember because every year kids drown during similar scenes. Beware of putting yourselves in danger.

### **Skit #2 “Ice Fishing With Uncle Bob”**

Leader chooses 3 student volunteers, 1 adult to go ice fishing with Uncle Bob. Often, a small student is chosen to be Uncle Bob because we say that he weighs 400 lbs. and the kids just roar.

Leader narrates: Uncle Bob (1<sup>st</sup> student) has decided to spend Sunday morning teaching his nephews (2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> student) how to ice fish. It is pretty cold out and his 2 nephews are watching him catch huge fish. As he reels them in, he has them come close to help pull the fish through the ice and there is a huge crack! Uncle Bob and one nephew fall through the ice. Since Uncle Bob weighs 400 lbs., he tosses his truck keys to his other nephew and tells him to crawl away from the hole and call for help. There is a cell phone in the truck and he calls for help. (Student stays safely back until help comes). Meanwhile, Uncle Bob and his nephew are holding their hands up out of the water to stay safer while waiting. The fire department arrives (teacher-volunteer) with their rescue sled and other equipment and free Uncle Bob and his nephew from the ice hole. The rescuers take care of the group and they are all fine.

Leader: Thank you for helping with this skit. Beware of how much pressure is put on a small area of ice. Everyone stand up and notice that all your weight is centered on the area where your feet are. That is why it can be safer to crawl away from a hole in the ice.

**Skit #3 “Dave Snowmobiling”** Leader chooses 3 student and 1 adult volunteers.

**Leader narrates:** The 1<sup>st</sup> student is recruited to be Dave driving a snowmobile over a field. The 2<sup>nd</sup> student is riding with Dave. The 3<sup>rd</sup> student, a cousin, is waiting for a turn to have a ride. The “ground” begins to rumble and a giant hole opens up and the snowmobile, Dave and his son fall into an ice hole-the field was a pond. The two in the ice are so surprised! The cousin waiting for a ride calls 911 on his cell.

About 15 minutes later, after Dave and his son fell through the ice, a rescue squad (teacher-volunteer) arrives with equipment to rescue Dave and his son, providing first aid to ward off hypothermia. The two are pulled from the ice and warmed up in the rescue vehicle with blankets and cocoa. They will all be fine.

**Leader:** Thank you for helping with this skit. This year there was a news story of a family snowmobiling and 3 did not survive a similar accident. A grandfather, daughter and granddaughter were lost. Beware of where you are at all times.

### **CONCLUSION:**

**Leader:** There is always a risk when near frozen lakes, ponds or rivers. Beware of the risks. Remember adults need to check ice depths regularly. As with any emergency, if you fall through the ice-remain calm and hold your arms and head up out of the water. If you are near someone who has fallen through the ice, keep yourself safe and call 911.

### **SUGGESTED MATERIALS & EQUIPMENT:**

**Ice Bath (Plastic tub, ice, water, small towels)**

**A Life jacket, throw-rope, photo display, water safety handouts**

**2 tables, 2 chairs, large towel (simulates hole in the ice)**

### **SOURCE OF ICE THICKNESS GUIDELINES:**

Massachusetts Division of Fisheries and Wildlife

[Mass.wildlife@state.ma.us](mailto:Mass.wildlife@state.ma.us) (Ice Strength and Safety Tips)

### **ALTERNATIVE FINALE:**

As an alternative finale to this program, it is possible to add the Winter Safety Quiz Game. It is easily adapted to other age groups and can be used to include teachers. Groups have found it to be a valuable tool for reinforcing the topic of Ice Safety.

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