

FALLING THROUGH ICE

When walking/driving on water that is frozen over, know and take precautions to prevent injury from falling through the ice, including frostbite and hypothermia.

Know the Risk Factors

- Larger water bodies (lakes) take longer to freeze than smaller ones (ponds)
- FLOWING water unfreezes more quickly than ponds
- Ice that has thawed and refrozen is only HALF as strong as new, clear ice

Bring safety kit when going onto ice:

- Cell phone to summon help
- Whistle, flares
- Throw rope, throwable floatation device
- Ice picks/screw drivers
- Dry clothes/hand warmers for post-rescue

Take Precautions

- Wear shoes with traction: spikes
- Check thickness at least every 150 ft.
- Minimum ice depths depend on what weight will be taken onto the ice
- Use buddy system and check local reports

Minimum Ice Depths – for Fresh Ice

More ice is needed to support more weight.



Double these depths if the ice is refrozen (not fresh).



**PREVENTING
FALLS ON ICE:
TIPS FOR
FARMERS**


GREAT PLAINS
Center for Agricultural Health

GPCAH.org

WALKING ON ICE

Midwestern winters are known for their cold, snow and ice. Everyone is at risk of falling on the ice this time of year.

On the farm, we often don't have the luxury of avoiding activities in cold weather – our animals depend on us to break ice and ensure their health and safety.

We can, however, take a minute to make sure we have taken precautions before heading outside. These tips are intended to minimize your chances of falling on ice AND to reduce the severity of an injury if you do slip on ice.

Prepare for Ice

Before early December:

- Inspect last year's shoes and ice grips and replace, as needed
- Purchase ice melt/deicing products to clear walkways

Inspect areas you remember had ice problems last season:

- Can you improve drainage before the ground freezes?
- Can you install a structure or handrail to hold on to during freezing periods?

Temperatures must reach these minimums before these deicers start melting ice:

- Various Blends: 20-22° F
- Sodium Chloride (Rock Salt): 15-22° F
- Urea: 15-20° F
- Potassium Chloride: 12-20° F
- Magnesium Chloride: 5° F
- Sodium Acetate: 5° F
- Calcium Magnesium Acetate: -15 to 5° F
- Calcium Chloride: -25 to -20° F

Walk Like a Penguin

The internet offers tips on how to “walk like a penguin” during winter when walking on icy surfaces. The goal is to keep your feet under your body to help maintain balance.

- Keep your knees loose
- Extend your arms to your side to help you maintain balance
- Point your feet outward when walking, not straight ahead
- Take small steps, like you are shuffling your feet
- Avoid wide steps: Taking smaller steps will reduce your risk of slipping



Wear Appropriate Gear

Select clothing for both cold weather and slip prevention.

- **Gloves:** We want to walk with our hands out to lower our center of gravity. So, cover those hands.
- **Coat/Outerwear:** Select outerwear that can absorb the impact if you fall
- **Shoes:** Non-slip soles with deep treads for everyday winter activities.



Additional traction may be needed for outdoor work.

Get additional traction from over-shoe devices:

Coils and Chains help in moderately icy patches



Spikes and Crampons may be needed with ice over deep snow



Designate a safe place to put on/take off shoes with these devices, because these:

- Make shoes *slippery on concrete*
- Will scratch/make holes in wood/carpeted floors