

St. Catharines Fire Services warns no ice is safe ice after Sunday rescue

March 8, 2021 — The experience of two teens who became trapped on a Lake Ontario ice shelf, one of them eventually ending up in the frigid water, is serving as a reminder to residents to stay off frozen water bodies as the temperature warms.

St. Catharines Fire Services responded to a call Sunday evening after two teens ventured out onto an ice shelf at the end of Geneva Street. One of the two teens broke through the ice and fell into the water, unable to extricate themselves from the frigid waters. The second teen managed to stay on the ice but could not safely assist his friend. Ultimately firefighters secured themselves to shore and ventured out onto the ice to rescue the two teens.

“Simply put no ice is safe ice, especially during this time of year when we see repeated thawing of ice surfaces,” said Deputy Fire Chief Dave Upper, adding, “freezing water poses serious risk, even for strong swimmers, and it can take just minutes for hypothermia to set in and impede individuals’ ability to swim or maintain consciousness.”

With temperatures on the rise, resulting in freeze-thaw cycles, even ice that appears thick on top may not be able to fully support an individual. The safest way to be safe around frozen water bodies is to stay off the ice entirely.

If someone goes through the ice call for help immediately and remember the safest way to perform an ice rescue is from shore, using a rope or stick to reach out to the person.

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