

# Firefighters warn people to stay clear of frozen water as temperatures drop

**The Scottish Fire and Rescue Service is warning communities across Scotland to stay clear of frozen water as temperatures drop.**

The national service is urging the public to be aware of the risks of going onto or allowing children and pets to go onto the ice.



According to the Royal Society for the Prevention of Accidents, more than 50 per cent of all drowning cases involving ice in the UK involved the attempted rescue of another person or a pet.

And SFRS is warning that while ice can look and feel solid, it can suddenly crack and cause a person to fall through and potentially become trapped under the ice.

SFRS' Head of Prevention and Protection DACO Alasdair Perry said: "We would ask everyone to be aware of the dangers of ice during this cold snap and strongly advise against walking or playing on any iced-up waterways and always ensure that children are kept away from any iced over ponds or rivers.

"If you are out with your pet, do not throw sticks or balls near frozen water, and if they do get into trouble on the ice, do not venture onto the ice yourself to attempt a rescue – dial 999.

“The ice may look solid, but it is not worth the risk to step out on to it.”

The low temperature of the water can also bring on cold-water shock, which can be potentially deadly.

Cold-water shock can cause breathing difficulties, blood vessels to close, the heart-rate to increase and lead to a heart attack.

Michael Avril, the Royal National Lifeboat Institution’s Regional Water Safety Lead for Scotland added: “Walking on ice is extremely risky and unpredictable and the RNLi advise that you avoid doing this. If you do fall through, the freezing water temperatures can bring on cold water shock.

“If you find yourself or someone else in trouble, dial 999 and ask for the fire service immediately. Do not attempt to rescue anyone yourself.”

For more information on Cold Water Shock please visit the [RNLi website](#) at

For more information on how to stay safe around frozen water, [visit](#)

SFRS’ Top Tips to stay safe around water:

Nobody should walk onto any frozen water, whether a river, pond, canal, or reservoir under any situation. Children and pets are particularly at risk when tempted to play on the ice formed on open water during cold weather.

Pets should be kept on leads when near frozen water and owners should refrain from throwing objects onto ice for them to retrieve.

If the worst happens, passers-by should shout reassurance to casualties without endangering themselves. Make sure help is on the way by phoning the emergency services on 999, don’t

assume someone else will have called.

Do not walk or climb onto the ice to attempt a rescue and do not get into the water, or you may become the next casualty.

If someone can't climb out of the water, it is not advisable, as many people think to move about in the water to keep warm while waiting for help. Instead, they should conserve their energy by keeping as still as possible.