



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Patty Ritchie

Staying Safe While Ice Fishing

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Senator Ritchie's Weekly Column

Each winter, fishing enthusiasts wait for the moment our local lakes and rivers freeze over and allow them to get out on the ice for some world-class ice fishing.

As state senator—and an outdoor enthusiast—I know this time of year is exciting for so sportsmen, from our region—and beyond. However, before you venture out on the ice it is important to make sure you have double-checked your safety list. That should start with knowing New York State's ice fishing regulations, which tell you where you can ice fish, how

many lines are allowed and more.

In addition to knowing the rules for ice fishing, there are a number of other safety tips you need to stay safe while out on the ice:

Do not ice fish alone: You should always have a friend with you when you venture out onto the ice. In addition, you must be present when ice-fishing lines are in the water.

Dress warmly: Always wear extra layers, and have hats, gloves, warm socks, boots and a jacket. It is also a good idea to bring change of clothing in case you get wet.

Know the ice thickness: Before you cut your fishing hole, make sure the ice is thick enough to hold you, your fishing buddies, your shanty and any other equipment you may have. A minimum of three to four inches of solid ice is the general rule for safety. Don't forget to check the ice periodically to stay safe.

Mark your territory: Ice shanties must be marked on the outside with the owner's name and address in letters at least 3 inches high.

Clear your territory: Shanties must be removed from all waters by March 15. This prevents them from potentially falling through the ice in spring and becoming hazards to navigation.

For more information on how to make sure your fun on the ice is not interrupted by a safety issue, I encourage you to visit the New York Department of Environmental Conservation website, [https:// www.dec.ny.gov](https://www.dec.ny.gov).