February 10, 2011

News Release

For Immediate Release

Frozen Waterways Can Pose Serious Hazards

With the arrival of winter weather and colder temperatures comes the increased potential for cold water and ice-related accidents. The Springfield Fire Department would like to remind citizens of the danger posed by frozen ponds, lakes, and streams. The Department encourages all to use caution when near water and to stay off the ice.

It is estimated that 250 people die each year after falling through ice-covered waterways. Cold water carries heat away from the body 25 times faster than air of the same temperature and, as a result, the body core immediately begins to lose heat to the outside environment. Within 10 minutes, a person may lose dexterity and motor function in their extremities and is at risk of drowning.

The Springfield Fire Department would like to remind all that the only way to stay safe around ice-covered waterways is to stay off the ice. Captain Jason Bogema, Springfield Water Rescue Team Leader adds, “It is very difficult to judge the thickness, and therefore the safety, of the ice on local waterways. Children should never be allowed to play on or near the ice, and are encouraged to wear a personal flotation device any time they are near the water.”

In the event you witness an ice emergency, do not venture onto the ice to attempt a rescue. Dial 911 immediately and remain on scene until rescuers arrive. The Springfield Fire Department Water Rescue Team will be conducting ice rescue training on Friday, Feb. 11.

For more information, contact: Assistant Fire Chief Randy Villines, (417) 864-1500.

Springfield Fire Department

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