

Winter Water Safety

In light of the recent tragedy in the West Midlands, and given the ongoing extremely cold temperatures, **Imerys** is working with partners to share this vitally important knowledge about **Winter Water Safety**.

Stewart Vale, environment, health and safety manager for [Imerys](#), explains:

"We shared the devastation felt across the country over the weekend, about the tragic drowning of three young boys. Given the ongoing cold temperatures and the fact that we have many flooded, disused pits across mid-Cornwall, we wanted to share some crucial safety advice.

"We understand that frozen water can look inviting, but it is never safe to venture onto the ice. The ice will not be thick enough to support the weight of anyone - adult or child. Anyone falling through the ice will very quickly experience cold water shock. Even experienced cold water swimmers, of which we know there are many in Cornwall, can easily find themselves in trouble in a quarry or pit, where the water temperature will be much colder than the sea."

What do do if you fall through ice

The Royal Life Saving Society ([RLSS](#)) has issued some excellent advice to help you if you do fall through ice:

- Keep calm and shout for 'help'
- Spread your arms across the surface of the ice in front of you
- If the ice is strong enough, kick your legs to slide onto the ice
- Lie flat and pull yourself towards the bank
- If the ice breaks, work your way to the bank-breaking the ice in front of you anyway
- If you cannot climb out, wait for help and keep as still as possible. Preserve heat by pressing your arms by your side and keep your legs together. Keep your head clear of the water
- Once you are safe, go to hospital immediately for a check up

What do do if you see someone fall through ice

- Shout for assistance and phone the emergency services – call 999 or 112
- Do not walk or climb onto the ice to attempt a rescue
- Shout to the casualty to 'keep still' and offer reassurance to keep them calm

- Try and reach them from the bank using a rope, pole, tree branch, clothing tied together or anything else which can extend your reach
- When reaching from the bank, lie down to avoid being pulled onto the ice
- If you cannot reach them, slide something which floats, such as a plastic bottle or football, across the ice for them to hold onto to stay afloat whilst help is on the way
- If the casualty is too far away, do not attempt to rescue them. Wait for the emergency services while calming and reassuring the casualty

To help explain the dangers to children, the RLSS has created this downloadable 'colouring in' resource - [click here](#). Additionally, this leaflet provides more useful guidance to help educate children - [click here](#).

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