Photo: Canva

Ice fishing: How to prepare for a safe and enjoyable day of winter angling

WHAT IS ICE FISHING?

Ice fishing is the practice of catching fish through holes drilled in the ice of standing bodies of water. Since there is no casting involved and no boats needed, ice fishing can be great way to introduce kids to fishing!

PACKING LIST

Gear - MUSTS

GOOD BOOTS, and the rest of your winter gear - dress in layers

extra socks + mitts

Some way of opening the ice

- hatchet, bar, auger

Ice scoop to clean the hole

A line with a hook and bait or lure

Cellphone

Clean drinking water, dry snacks

Toilet paper

Heat packs/ hand warmers (reusable or not)

Small medical kit

Good metal shovel **or 2**

Gear - maybes

Extra battery pack/booster pack

Shelter – tent or shack, vehicle

Heat source, fuel for heat source, C0 detector

Chairs

Recovery straps (no chain!)

Keep feet off the ice – interlocking foam mats, floor mat from your car, pop crates, chunk of firewood

Electronics – fish finder

Cooking device

Lip Grippers

Bucket potty

Boot Cleats

Ice picks – up your sleeves

Fun Extras

Skates, helmet

Music / portable speaker

Make games on ice – snow block toss

Your well-behaved dog

Outdoor fire pit / firewood

A group of friends

Thermos of hot chocolate

Kid's tablet

DURING YOUR OUTING...

- Check the ice thickness as you go using a spud bar, hatchet, or auger, referencing thickness guidelines.
- Use GPS to navigate as sometimes there are no landmarks and the skies darken early in the winter.
- Use a shelter if needed, and a carbon monoxide meter if using combustion stove/light.
- Implement responsible fish handling. Handle with care, release quickly, or kill humanely if keeping.
- Stay warm and have fun!

RESOURCES

- Connect with the Female Anglers of Manitoba through their Facebook page.
- Fish maps: Avenza App - Angler's Edge Mapping, Navionics, i-boating Marine Navigation App, i-Hunter.
- Keep track of the best of your angling adventures with the Manitoba Master Angler Certificate.