



RICHARD W. STANEK
HENNEPIN COUNTY SHERIFF

09 February 2012

Hennepin County Board of Commissioners
Hennepin County Government Center – A2400
300 South Sixth Street
Minneapolis, Minnesota 55487

Dear Commissioners;

I would like to make you aware of an advisory that the Sheriff's Office is sending out to the public today:

Due to the increasingly unpredictable ice conditions as a result of unseasonably warm weather, the Hennepin County Sheriff's Office is prohibiting the use of cars, trucks, and SUVs on all frozen bodies of water in Hennepin County. Lake access points will close effective immediately today, February 9. This will remain in effect until further notice.

It is unsafe for vehicles to drive on the ice on lakes, rivers, or ponds in Hennepin County. On Lake Minnetonka, there are areas of open water and channels are extremely dangerous and have moving water.

Again, the restriction applies to cars, trucks, and SUVs. Recreational vehicles such as snowmobiles and ATVs will be allowed on county lakes. People using recreational vehicles, those who are walking or ice fishing on lakes -- are urged to use extreme caution due to thin ice and open water. Ice thickness varies considerably due to the freezing and thawing that has taken place.

In one week, we've had five vehicles break through the ice. Last night, a vehicle on Eagle Lake in Maple Grove broke through the ice and required towing. Earlier in the week, an ATV broke through Parker's Lake in Plymouth. On Lake Minnetonka, there have been three separate incidents where vehicles became submerged:

On February 4, two men in a pick-up truck were driving on Smith's Bay, broke through the ice, and both men escaped through the windows of the vehicle. The vehicle became submerged. The men made it to shore.

On February 4, one in a pick-up truck was driving in West Upper lake, broke through the ice, and escaped through the window of the vehicle. The vehicle became submerged. A passerby, a man who was cross country skiing, assisted the man with getting out of the lake. The man was transported to a hospital and treated for hypothermia.



On January 29, a man and a juvenile in an SUV were driving on Haltstead Bay channel, broke through the ice, and both people escaped through the windows of the vehicle. The vehicle became submerged. Both people made it to shore.

For reference, you'll find Minnesota state statute 86B.106 that gives the Sheriff the authority to prohibit the use of motorized vehicles on all or portions of the county's lakes. Officers may issue a citation to violators under sub-section (b) if they deem necessary. We will allow time today for people to remove their vehicles from the lakes and then our enforcement begins this evening.

If you have further questions, feel free to contact me.

Thank you,

Richard W. Stanek
Hennepin County Sheriff

Cc: Mr. Richard Johnson
Mr. David Hough
7-County Metro Sheriffs
Hennepin County Chiefs of Police
Hennepin County Fire Chiefs
Hennepin County Mayors
Mr. Jim Konrad
Mr. Jim Franklin
Sheriff Bud Olson
Mr. Greg Nybek