



IOWA DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES

Iowa DNR News

Conservation and Recreation

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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- [Stay safe as Iowa lakes freeze over](#)
- [Ledges State Park campground to reopen December 1](#)

Stay safe as Iowa lakes freeze over

The recent blast of arctic air is growing ice on lakes and ponds over much of Iowa. Anglers are starting to get out for the popular early ice fishing season.

“Many of us can’t wait to get out on the ice each winter,” said Joe Larscheid, chief of fisheries for the Iowa Department of Natural Resources (DNR). “Ice fishing is a fun, inexpensive activity for anglers of all ages to get outdoors and avoid cabin fever.”

The DNR recommends a minimum of four inches of clear ice for fishing and at least five inches for snowmobiles and ATVs.

“Check ice thickness as you make your way to your favorite fishing spot,” Larscheid said. “Ice conditions change constantly and its thickness can vary across the lake. Trust your instincts – if the ice does not look right, don’t go out.”

Early ice offers an excellent chance for success. If fish are finicky, cut a series of holes and spend 15 minutes at each hole. Use small baits and light line.

Safety Tips on the Ice

- No ice is 100 percent safe.
- New ice is usually stronger than old ice.
- Don’t go out alone - if the worst should happen, someone will be there to call for help or to help rescue.
- Let someone know where you are going and when you will return.
- Check ice thickness as you go out - there could be pockets of thin ice or places where ice recently formed.
- Avoid off-colored snow or ice. It is usually a sign of weakness.
- The insulating effect of snow slows down the freezing process.
- Bring along these basic items to help keep you safe: hand warmers, ice cleats to help prevent falls, ice picks (wear around your neck) to help you crawl out of the water if you fall in, a life jacket, a floating safety rope, a whistle to call for help, a basic first aid kit and extra dry clothes including a pair of gloves.

Media Contact: Joe Larscheid, Chief of Fisheries, Iowa Department of Natural Resources, 515-201-3376.

Ledges State Park campground to reopen December 1

The Ledges State Park campground will reopen on Saturday, December 1, following a renovation project that has kept it closed for all of 2018 season.

The renovation project included upgrading the electrical system to 50-amp service, extending the current water and sewer systems to establish new full hook-up sites, and resurfacing all campsite pads with new rock.

Ledges, like many Iowa State Parks, is currently in the non-peak season. The shower and modern restroom buildings are closed for the winter but there is a pit vault latrine located just outside the main campground entrance. Water to hydrants is also shut off at this time. Starting on December 1, all campsites at Ledges will be on a first come, first served basis through the winter season and reservations will go into effect for stays on April 1, 2019 and beyond.

“Although it’s not the peak season, it’s exciting to have the campground reopened,” says park manager Andy Bartlett. “In addition to upgrading the infrastructure needs of the campground, I hope campers to Ledges will appreciate the effort made to maintain site spacing and shade. Our staff is looking forward to a busy 2019 where visitors can expect opportunities such as interpretive programs, volunteer events, and a relaxing natural setting that has made the Ledges campground one of the most popular in Iowa.”

Media contact: Andy Bartlett, Park Manager (515) 290-7677.