



OFFICE OF STANDARDS AND INSTRUCTIONAL PROGRAMS

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TO: BOCES District Superintendents
Superintendents of Public Schools
Charter School Leaders
Non-Public School Administrators
FROM: Dr. Santosha Oliver, Assistant Commissioner
SUBJECT: Seasonal Water and Ice Safety Awareness within Safety
Education Programs

New York State's diverse geography and changing seasons provide many recreational environments, including lakes, rivers, pools, and frozen waterways. These seasonal transitions can pose safety risks that require age-appropriate instruction.

Commissioner's Regulation 8 NYCRR §107.1 requires all students to receive safety education, including recreational safety. While curriculum decisions remain a local responsibility, districts may consider how to include water safety and ice safety within their broader safety education and instructional programs.

Water safety education is a key part of recreational safety in New York State and ice-related incidents are a seasonal concern in communities across our State. The Department encourages water safety to be included in locally determined safety education. This helps students safely navigate their environment throughout the year.

Districts may choose to integrate water and ice safety topics into health education, physical education, or other instructional contexts, adjusting instruction to community needs and resources. Lessons can focus on health and social emotional skills such as risk awareness, decision-making, and responsibility, especially where facilities are limited.

Schools may collaborate with community partners, such as parks departments or emergency responders, to reinforce seasonal safety and engage families.

For information on winter recreation and outdoor safety, districts may consult resources from the [New York State Department of Environmental Conservation \(DEC\)](http://www.dec.state.ny.us). These include guidance on winter safety.