



THE STATE EDUCATION DEPARTMENT / THE UNIVERSITY OF THE STATE OF NEW YORK / ALBANY, NY 12234

OFFICE OF STANDARDS AND INSTRUCTIONAL PROGRAMS

Dr. Santosha Oliver, Assistant Commissioner

89 Washington Avenue, Room 319 EB, Albany, NY 12234

Career and Technical Education: Phone: 518-486-1457 / E-mail: emsccte@nysed.gov / www.nysed.gov/career-technical-education

Educational Design and Technology: Phone: 518-474-5461 / E-mail: edtech@nysed.gov / www.nysed.gov/edtech

Standards and Instruction: Phone: 518-474-5922 / E-mail: P12StandardsInstruction@nysed.gov / www.nysed.gov/standards-instruction

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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 \(DEC\)](#). These include guidance on winter safety.