

# Safety Tips

## Skating Safety

Skating is a fun activity for any Section, either at an indoor rink or making the most of winter by finding some ice outside. A Venturer Company recently held a skating evening at a local outdoor rink. Wearing a helmet was not a rink policy, so the Venturers didn't make a point of it themselves—even though this is a Scouts Canada requirement, as described in both the [Safety Equipment Standards](#) and [Winter Sports Standards](#).

While skating, one of the Venturers fell and struck her head on the ice. She complained of a severe headache to a Scouter, who recognized this as a sign that she had likely suffered a concussion. The Scouters removed the youth from the activity and contacted her parents. When she was picked up, the Scouters recommended a visit to a doctor.

The Scouters reacted appropriately to the incident, but the Company made a crucial mistake by not taking all the right precautions for this outing. Follow these best practices to keep everyone in your group safe on your next skating adventure!

- **Wear a helmet.** The most likely way to get seriously hurt when skating is to hit one's head on the ice. Wearing a helmet can go a long way to reduce the severity of any injuries related to this kind of fall, if not prevent a concussion altogether.
- **Respond appropriately to a suspected concussion.** Even if someone is wearing a helmet, a concussion can result from a fall on the ice. Know the signs and symptoms of a concussion: headache, dizziness, nausea and blurred vision. And know what to do next: stop playing, and get checked by a doctor. Check out [this Youth Tip](#) for more information about concussions.
- **Bundle up!** If it's cold enough for outdoor ice, then it's cold enough to watch out for hypothermia and frostbite. Dress for the weather, and plan to skate where shelter is available if anyone needs to go warm up.
- **Check the ice first.** If skating on a body of water, make sure the ice is thick enough to be safe: 10 centimetres (4 inches) or more. Respect any posted notices warning your group to stay off the ice. Take a look at this [Ice Safety tip](#) for more information.
- **Don't get burned.** When sharing hot chocolate or another warm treat, make sure nothing offered is so hot that it could lead to a burn.
- **Use skate guards.** Skate blades are sharp and can be dangerous. Encourage everyone in your group to be prepared with skate guards to prevent accidental cuts when skates aren't on feet.
- **Play safely.** Skating games (like tag) can be a lot of fun, but it's important to be responsible. Don't put others at risk with your group's game if sharing the rink—play another time when you have the rink to yourselves. If playing hockey, be prepared with all of the right safety equipment, and stick to a non-contact game.

