

Statement from the City of Chestermere regarding storm pond enforcement

January 16, 2021

Dear Chestermere,

Some residents have expressed anger, and threats, regarding our approach to maintaining safety on our storm ponds.

We would like to share some important information which we hope these residents will take the time to read and watch.

Why storm ponds are so dangerous

Safety on storm ponds is not a new issue in Chestermere, nor in communities across Alberta and Canada. Every year we try to share and advise of the dangers. A storm pond is purpose built infrastructure. It serves a very specific function and recreation isn't one of them. The issue isn't the surface, it is what is happening below the surface.

It isn't like the lake, or a regular natural pond. Although it may look as such, there are reasons we have safety signs located in numerous locations around storm ponds.

This video helps explain: [EPCOR's Stay safe around stormwater facilities this winter](#)

Also, cold winter communities across North America face the same challenges. People look at storm ponds and think, "ah, a place to skate". This is far from the truth. It is far different than other lakes or regular ponds.

Please see these links.

- [Scientists study safety of skating on urban storm water ponds](#)
- [On Thin Ice: Scientists study safety of skating on urban storm water ponds](#)
- [Calgary Fire warns of storm pond skating dangers](#)

Tragic Storm Pond Incidents and Near Misses

Every year, numerous times, there are accidents and often tragic ones as a result of people being or skating on storm pond ice across North America. This ice isn't safe for skating and any makeshift rink on a storm pond isn't a City sanctioned rink. These have been put up, unlawfully, by residents. We ask residents to please not make rinks on storm ponds. Here are some reasons why:

- [Teens rescued with turbans, garden hose after falling through ice in northeast Calgary](#)
- [Boy, 11, dies in hospital after falling through thin ice at Milton pond, police say](#)
- [Investigators say child falls through ice, drowns in Isabella County](#)

[Yesterday's incident in Chestermere is just another example of a child falling in.](#)

Fortunately he was rescued. While the ice on the Kinniburgh pond was a few inches thick and presumably safe, under the water was clear flow, moving ice and storm water, murky, with salt, and other contaminants and discharges into the storm drains and into the pond, released from many outlets into the pond. The melt also makes it worse.

The science behind these dangers is without question.

Storm Pond Science

Again, storm pond infrastructure is designed to bring all run off and store it and prevent flooding. We plant and naturalize around it to make it look nice, and to help purify, but make no mistake, they are very different from regular ponds or other bodies of water.

Other details can be found here:

- [Chestermere's Storm Pond Safety Information](#)
- [City of London stresses stormwater ponds are 'unstable and dangerous' for skaters](#)
- [EPCOR: About Stormwater Facilities](#)

Keeping Kids Safe

We understand that some are angry.

Comments such as that we are taking enjoyment of skating away from children is the furthest from the truth.

We have 13 safe and sanctioned outdoor rinks to be enjoyed. Storm ponds are not for skating. Every year people fall through and drown...children. While the ice appears safe, it is not. Underneath are substances eroding the ice from the bottom up, and there is water movement contributing to the dangers.

We are hopeful for your support of our efforts to keep the community safe, and encourage fun skating on any of our other 13 safe, tested, maintained, outdoor rinks. More than just at the Landing. These can be found here:

www.chestermere.ca/skate

Thanks for taking the time to read this and all of the accompanying information.

Enjoy the weekend,

The City and City Council of Chestermere