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# Southbridge man dies in fall through ice

By Matt Rocheleau | GLOBE CORRESPONDENT JANUARY 22, 2012

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A 27-year-old Southbridge man has died after he and two friends fell through ice while snowmobiling on a pond in Dudley Saturday night. They were pulled from the water by firefighters and emergency workers, authorities said yesterday.

Richard C. Redfield of Rose Street had been in the water at New Pond for at least 15 minutes before Fire Department and emergency medical service officials from Dudley were able to rescue him, according to the Worcester County district attorney's office.

Redfield was taken to Harrington Healthcare at Hubbard in Webster where he died, authorities said. One of his friends was taken to University of Massachusetts Memorial Medical Center in Worcester for treatment of minor injuries.

Redfield was snowmobiling with friends Jeffrey P. Lougie, 37, of Dudley and Wayne Montigny, 47, of Killingly, Conn., when all three fell through the ice about 100 yards offshore near 9 Hillcrest St. in the south-central Massachusetts town that borders Connecticut, the district attorney's office said.

All three men were out of the water by 5:45 p.m., officials said last night. The medical examiner's office will determine the cause and manner of death, and State Police detectives assigned to the district attorney's office, state environmental police, and Dudley police continue to investigate, officials said.

The Dudley Police Department referred questions to the district attorney's office. A spokesman for the district attorney's office could not provide more details. Dudley Fire officials referred questions to the department's chief, who was not available for comment yesterday.


The accident comes less than one week after the state's fire marshal issued a reminder to residents about the dangers of ice.

"Each winter, injuries from hypothermia are reported, in addition to skaters and ice fishermen falling through ice, boaters and canoeists overturning in their crafts, and people chasing their unleashed pets onto the ice," Massachusetts Fire Marshal Stephen Coan said in a statement last Tuesday. "There are several variables that affect the strength of ice on bodies of water, so many that no ice can ever be declared completely safe, especially running water in streams, brooks, rivers. . . . The only truly safe ice is at your local skating rink."

Because air temperature changes continuously, ice frequently thaws and refreezes, state fire officials said. And, other factors - including uneven ice thickness, currents, tree stumps, rocks, and ground water - can weaken the ice.

An average of about 10 people nationwide drown accidentally each day, and it is estimated that half of all victims succumb from the effects of cold water, not water-filled lungs, state officials said citing the US Centers for Disease Control.

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