

# Dock Bubblers, Do You Have One, Thinking of getting One?

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Be aware! Dock Bubblers are a sticky subject for most, but there are major problems here that need your attention.

There are hundreds of people that use the ice for recreation every winter! First off most bubbler owners do not post any signs for their bubbler hazard. This is a serious problem and the owner is setting themselves up for litigation. When there is an accident that is caused by your bubbler you are liable. What's worse? You may find that your insurance may not cover this problem. *Snowmobile Central Ontario* magazine spent a lot of time speaking with the Insurance Bureau of Canada. This group gave us a real eye-opener on the situation; there hasn't been a lawsuit yet so there isn't a precedent set; but, the way things are headed, it's only a matter of time. What about the size of your open water? Most owners that use bubblers open up way too much. This is another problem that is out of control and will certainly end in disaster.

## Protect Yourself and Others

Bubblers are used to keep the ice away from docks so, when the water/ ice level drops, the ice doesn't pull on the dock. Having the ice 10 feet away from your dock is sufficient, but most go way beyond this. There are reports of 500 feet of open water and this is a major hazard. Once you bubble over 20 feet, you open up a play area for hot-dogger snowmobilers that like to play on this open water. The problem here is that this creates tracks that lead into your open water that some new snowmobilers may deem to be safe. New riders like to follow tracks; they believe that this is safe.

Signage that designates "Danger Open Water" is a good idea and these signs need to be large enough so that one can see them from a safe distance. At night there should be amber flashing light, not red. Red lights are used for motor vehicles that are shown to the rear and can be mistaken for another snowmobile. A flashing amber caution light is a warning for people that use that lake at night.

Due diligence is a preventative thing; by controlling the size of your open water hazard and having it posted, you may find sympathy in a law suit. If you do end up in court over this, it would be good thing to be able to say to the judge, "Your honour, I did everything I could to protect people from this hazard".

## Protect Yourself and Save Money

With the recent costs of hydro increasing the owner can save a lot of money on hydro by installing timers and thermostats. The timer could be set for over night use which ties into the new "Time of Use" - that is, cheaper pricing now used by Hydro One. The thermostat could be dialed in with the temperature to keep the water hazard to a minimum for further savings. These ideas will save the owner on their hydro bill and keep their hazard to a minimum. And once the ice/ water level is lowered in early March, the bubbler can be turned off for the balance of the season, - another hydro saving. A win-win situation!