

16 December 2024



**Good morning Flatwater Lake residents! Here is your annual reminder about bubblers/de-icers. Please limit use per the recommendations contained in this document.**

## **The Impact of Dock Bubblers and De-Icers on Lake Health and Safety**

Ice cover is crucial for maintaining water quality in our lake but you also want a small buffer of water around your dock. If you're using a de-icer or bubbler, it's important to minimize the amount of ice melting beyond your immediate dock area. The next two pages explain why—and how you can do so responsibly.

# Why Ice Cover Matters

## 1. Improves Water Quality:

- Ice reduces sunlight penetration, which helps control algae growth.
- It promotes the natural turnover of the water column, essential for maintaining a healthy ecosystem.

## 2. Limits Impact from Waterfowl:

- Geese and other birds are beautiful to watch but can significantly harm water quality. A single goose eats its body weight daily and expels most of it into the lake, leading to nutrient overload and algae blooms. Ice discourages waterfowl from gathering on the lake.

## 3. Enhances Safety:

- Open water created by de-icers increases the risk for ice-related activities such as skating, sledding, and fishing. Keeping the ice intact ensures a safer environment for everyone.

## 4. Prevents Ice Damage:

- Uniform freezing and melting of the ice sheet reduce the risk of wind-driven icebergs damaging docks. High winds can push large, free-moving ice sheets into docks, causing thousands of dollars in repairs. Allowing the ice sheet to freeze securely to the shoreline minimizes this risk.

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## Smart De-Icer Practices

You don't need to run your de-icer 24/7 to protect your dock. In fact, doing so can harm the lake and frustrate your neighbors by melting large sections of ice. Instead, try these tips:

### • Use Smart Technology:

- Invest in Wi-Fi-enabled plugs (such as Lutron or similar devices) to control your de-icer remotely via an app on your phone.
- This lets you easily turn the de-icer on and off based on weather conditions, without trekking down to the dock.

### • Manual Controls:

- Simply toggle the breaker for your dock as needed to manage ice buildup without additional expense.

- **Optimize Ice Melt Around Your Dock:**
    - Aim for a small zone of open water (3 to 5 feet) around your dock. This protects your dock without compromising the entire lake's ice sheet. Floating docks benefit naturally from sunlight-warmed floats, which melt ice in a manageable radius.
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## Community-Friendly Guidelines

Most lakes in the region only allow de-icers to run from January to March. While Flatwater Lake does not yet have a formal rule, following common-sense guidelines can help protect our lake's health and safety:

- **Run your de-icer only when needed** to prevent ice damage to your dock.
  - Avoid melting large portions of the lake. Focus instead on maintaining a small, controlled area of open water around your dock.
  - You don't need an \$800 multi-acre deicer. Many have been able to keep up with the ice using a submersible sump pump and cycled the runtime with the methods noted above.
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## The Bigger Picture

By working together to maintain a uniform ice sheet and minimize unnecessary ice melt, we can:

- Protect water quality by reducing algae growth and minimizing waterfowl waste.
- Enhance safety for ice activities like skating and fishing.
- Avoid costly dock repairs from wind-driven ice damage.

Let's prioritize our lake's health and safety while enjoying its beauty year-round. Following these simple practices ensures we preserve our shared resource for everyone.

Thanks!

Flatwater Lake HOA