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- Home
- News
- Weather
- Traffic
- Sports
- Entertainment
- Business
- Links 24
- TV Schedule
- Lotto
- Gas Price
- Newsletter
- About Us
- Bios
- Contact Us

Fri Mar. 19 2010 9:18:22 PM

Ice surfers safe after falling into frigid water in central Ontario

The Canadian Press

GEORGINA, Ont. — Five men are safe after they fell through the ice Friday while ice surfing using kites on Cook's Bay, on the southern part of Lake Simcoe.

Rescue crews from Georgina and York Region pulled four men out of the icy water, after they had been immersed for about 20 minutes.

The fifth surfer made his way back to shore on his own.

Three of the men were taken to a Newmarket hospital, while a fourth was taken by air ambulance to Toronto's St. Michael's Hospital for treatment of hypothermia.

Police say the men were not wearing life-jackets when they went through the ice, which had melted as the temperature in the area had reached 18 degrees Friday afternoon.

"I don't know why anybody would be out there," acting Sgt. Kevin Smith of York Regional Police told CTV News.

Georgina firefighters used an air boat to reach the surfers while five police officers, wearing protective gear, ventured out on foot but kept breaking through the ice along the way.

"Everybody went through, but they're trained for it," said Smith.

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