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Spring thaw dangers

As the weather warms up this spring, the combination of melting snow and anticipated springtime rainfall can cause rivers and streams to raise. It is important to be aware of the potential hazards that can occur when standing next to rivers and creeks.
People think water has to be deep for it to be dangerous when the force of running water in just two feet of water can present extreme challenges. Water will push you downstream and hold you there, knocking you down if you try to stand up whether or not your a strong swimmer. Parents should make sure children avoid playing near banks, which can get undercut by the rushing water, causing the land to give way.
Temperature also plays a factor if someone falls into a river. At this time of year water is cold enough to induce cardiac arrest and can also cause one's body temperature to drop extremely fast causing hypothermia to set in very quickly. It is important to respect water's speed and temperatures and exercise extreme caution around moving water.
Icicles that form at the bottom of sloping roofs is something pedestrians need to give a heads-up to. If part of a roof becomes warm enough to melt snow that is lying on it, the snow will melt and turn to water, which will run down a sloped roof. When water subsequently encounters a cold surface it will revert to ice. Over time large amounts of water continuously melting can form rather large icicles. With the warmer weather approaching these large icicles can give way and come crashing down on unsuspecting pedestrians.
If you're walking by an older building with a sloped roof, be aware of heavy snow or ice accumulation and spot any dangers.

By Michelle Austen