

Frequently Asked Questions

How long do ice sculptures last?

- In ideal conditions, ice sculptures last up to 8-10 hours in a decently recognizable state. Some sculptures last much longer. It can take over a day for the ice to melt entirely into water.
- The ideal conditions are inside, away from heat sources, direct sunlight, and wind. If outdoors, having it in the shade will help a lot. Place under a tent if rain is in the forecast.
- The elements strongly impact the life of an ice sculpture, with temperature of course having the biggest impact. Ideal temperatures are 70°F and less. Ice will melt a bit faster in warmer temps. James can carve the ice thicker if needed to help accommodate a longer event.
- Direct sunlight decays ice. If left in direct sunlight for 1 hour, the ice will become white and brittle, an effect called "sunburn". A light bump may cause shards of ice to crumble. Logos and images inside sunburned ice are hard to see.
- Wind will erode the ice quickly. This will not cool the ice down, so **do not use a fan!**
- Contact with fluids accelerate melting. Water is warmer than melting temperature and will melt the ice. So having many shots going through an ice luge decays the piece more quickly.

What do I need to display an ice sculpture?

- For most sculptures, all you will need is a stable surface that can support up to 150-200lbs (try sitting on it!). A table linen for a nice presentation, and a 5 gallon bucket to collect the melting water.
- Ice sculpture quotes include delivery and setup. Once we arrive, we just need to know where you want it displayed and we will take care of the rest.
- Drip trays are also included. These are trays that have tubes running from the back. The trays collect the melting water which then drains through the tube and into the bucket. After 2-3 hours, the bucket should be ready to dump, which does not require moving the ice sculpture.
- Battery powered LED lights are also supplied. These are color-changeable and are displayed under the sculpture to provide a beautiful glow.
- Large displays that are meant to be set on the floor will include floor mats and special pumps that suck the water from the trays and train them into the buckets for emptying.

What do I do with the ice sculpture at the end of the event?

- For the average ice sculpture, the client or the venue dispose of the ice sculpture. Ice is made with clean water, so they can be deposited in a sink or outside. Try to place them out of the way where people will walk so they don't slip.
- If you want help, we offer a tear-down and clean up service for an extra fee. Larger sculptures will have tear down included in the quote.

How is the ice so clear?

- We make our ice from Clinebell machines. These machines freeze from the bottom only and a fountain pump is used to circulate the tap water. As the water freezes, the current prevents the bubbles from sticking to the surface of the ice, making it clear. It takes around 3-6 days (depending on temperature) to make a 300lb block of ice.
- As the ice is freezing, objects can be placed on the ice and ice will grow around the object, encasing it.
- White ice (like the cubes from your freezer or at your grocer) is ice that has air bubbles frozen in it, which lead to faster melting. Our clear ice, on the other hand, is very dense, almost like a man-made glacier, and slower melting because the core temperature stays colder.
- Ice also acclimates to different temperatures. So ice in a 20°F freezer will be 20°F, while ice in a 0°F freezer will be 0°F. The colder the ice, the longer it will take to melt, but it is also more prone to cracking when exposed to warmer ambient temps.

What do you use to carve an ice sculpture?

- For a professional ice carver, the chainsaw is the artist's best friend. As a carving progresses, wood carving tools are used, such as chisels, angle grinders, die grinders (large dremels) with custom bits, and routers. There are also special custom tools made exclusive for ice carving, such as the scrub board, a small sheet of plywood with a bunch of screws used for sanding sheets of ice.
- When James teaches ice carving workshops, students will only use chisels and scratch knives. Occasionally a drill gun is used with a router bit for details.