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Advice for Pedestrians, Cyclists & Motorcyclists In Snow & Icy Conditions

Communications Department
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Údarás Um Shábháilteacht Ar Bhóithre
Road Safety Authority

Advice for Pedestrians, Cyclists & Motorcyclists In Snow & Icy Conditions

Walking, cycling and biking in the wintertime can be hazardous but especially so in snow and icy conditions.

While it is advisable for cyclists and motorcyclists to consider cancelling a journey and taking alternative transport, in such conditions, pedestrians may not have that choice.

Many slips and falls on snow and ice happen in places people regard as safe and secure, typically outside their front door, on the door step, on the path or while getting out of the car or truck. DO NOT underestimate the dangers of snow and ice. Try to keep your driveway and / or path as clear of ice and snow as possible. Help an elderly neighbour to do this if you can.

Each winter slips and falls cause serious injuries. Even when surfaces do not look especially icy or slippery, it is very possible that a thin sheet of transparent ice or “Black Ice” is covering your pathway putting you at risk. When you approach a footpath or roadway that appears to be covered with ice or snow, always use extreme caution.

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The most typical injuries caused by slips and falls on ice and snow are fractures and dislocations of the wrist, shoulder and ankle.

Winter pedestrian safety is especially important for older persons, who need to be extra cautious when walking, as a fall on the ice can cause them to break a hip, or other bones

Read on for tips on walking, cycling and biking safely in the snow and ice:

Advice for Pedestrians	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• If a journey cannot be avoided walk on a footpath, not in the street. If there are no footpaths walk on the right hand side of the road (towards oncoming traffic).• Be extremely careful as frost, ice and snow will make walking on footpaths very dangerous.• Remember that footpaths may not be treated so walk with extreme care• Make sure you are wearing appropriate footwear, wear shoes or boots with appropriate traction• Don't walk with your hands in your pockets, walk with your hands out and wear gloves so you can break your fall if you do slip.• In extreme conditions consider an appropriate walking stick or walking pole.• Avoid walking in the streets at all costs if possible. Remember, cars and trucks slip and slide, too! If it's an emergency, and you can't avoid the street, wear bright or reflective clothing.
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	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Visibility is reduced in snowy or freezing fog conditions so wear high visibility clothing, an armband, Sam Browne belt or a high visibility vest. Consider carrying a torch.• Wear clothing that does not restrict your vision.• Stay warm, but DO NOT impair your vision with hoodies, ski masks, scarves, hats, etc. This type of clothing could prevent you from spotting icy conditions that may lead to a fall or not enable you to see a car that is spinning out of control.• Try to avoid carrying things while walking in the winter, as this can throw you off balance.• Avoid pushing young children in buggies / strollers if at all possible. If you must push your child in a buggy / stroller on the ice, take great care and walk extremely slowly.• Snow and ice cause havoc quickly, so use extra caution when crossing roadways, and always cross at pedestrian crossings.• Ice can easily hide under a light dusting of snow. Just because you don't see the ice doesn't mean it's not there waiting for your unsuspecting footfalls.• If you can't avoid the ice and snow, bend your knees slightly and take slower, shorter steps to help reduce the chance of a slip and fall and an injury.• If forced to use the steps at someone's home, apartment, or other public building, walk slow and take shorter steps when descending. The same is true of driveways and other hilly terrain; these areas can be very dangerous when they become slippery with ice or snow. Steps especially can be hard to clear and build up ice easily.
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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Be aware of overhead hazards! Falling icicles and chunks of snow pose a serious risk. In extreme cold weather icicles can build up in size very quickly and are lethal. Their size and dagger-like formation are extremely dangerous for pedestrians. Be aware of what's happening above you, and stay clear from the edges of buildings. • It's not a good idea to go jogging in snow or icy conditions
<p>Advise for Motorcyclists and Cyclists</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Motorcyclists / Cyclists should not compromise their safety by their 'need' to travel in icy/snow conditions. Cancel your journey or take alternative transport. • Visibility is reduced in snowy condition so cyclists should wear a Sam Browne Bandoleer belt or high visibility vest and ensure the lights on your bike are working correctly. • Cyclists should adhere to the requirement of a white light to the front and a red light to the rear. • Wear an approved helmet and consider clear eye protection. • Motorcyclists should avoid wearing a dark visor in any bad light conditions. • Remember other road users may not 'expect' you and could therefore compromise your safety

Working To Save Lives

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Páirc Ghnó Ghleann na Muaidhe, Cnoc an tSabhaircín, Bóthar Bhaile Átha Cliath, Béal an Átha, Co. Mhaigh Eo
Moy Valley Business Park, Primrose Hill, Dublin Road, Ballina, Co. Mayo
local: 1890 50 60 80 fax: (096) 25 000 email: info@rsa.ie website: www.rsa.ie