

## Top 10 Safety Tips To Avoid A Slip or Fall In Ice and Snow

While walking on footpaths and in public places, or entering and exiting your car or truck, DO NOT underestimate the dangers of snow and ice.

Each winter slips and fall accidents 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.

During the extremely cold weather at the beginning of 2010 the Emergency Department of Cork University Hospital experienced a ten fold increase in injuries due to falls as a result of the snow and icy conditions. The most typical injuries fractures and dislocations of the wrist, shoulder and ankle.

Many slips and falls 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.

If you are out walking in snow or icy conditions wear appropriate footwear, 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. It's better to have a broken wrist than a cracked skull!

It's not a good idea to go jogging in such conditions. It is surprising how many people pick up injuries, each year, after falling while out jogging.

The RSA has the following “Top 10 Safety Tips for Pedestrians” to help avoid the possibility of a broken bone that could easily lead to an operation and a long recovery:

1. 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.
2. Remember that footpaths may not be treated so walk with extreme care, make sure you are wearing appropriate footwear and in extreme conditions consider an appropriate walking stick or walking pole.
3. 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.
4. Visibility is reduced in snowy condition so wear high visibility clothing or carry a torch
5. 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.
6. Snow and ice cause havoc quickly, so use extra caution when crossing roadways, and always cross at pedestrian crossings.

7. 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.
8. 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.
9. 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.
10. 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.