Recent storms have coated cars and roads with ice.

Ice storms and freezing rain are making roads into skating rinks across the country, and while it is best to stay home when the weather gets this bad, we all know doing so is easier said than done. Even if you are able to avoid commuting to work, you still have critical errands like school pick-ups and getting more gas for the snow blower.

While people worry a lot about driving on snow, trying to drive on ice is much worse. Snow tends to make it harder to get a vehicle moving, ice makes it almost impossible to stop or maneuver in an emergency. But it is possible to drive in icy weather without running into things. So if you have to go out, here are a few things to remember that will help keep you on the road.

1. Relax. Try to maintain a light grip on the steering wheel instead of the anxiety-inspired white-knuckle grasp. You’ll be more comfortable and better able to sense feedback from the road that can tell you when you are losing traction.

2. Slow down. You can stop on ice; it just takes a long time and a lot of space. The slower you go, the better your chances of avoiding expensive fender-benders. Also, count on taking twice the usual time to get where you are going, especially if you take back roads that may not have gotten attention from plows and salt spreaders.

3. Watch for danger areas. Your worst enemy is black ice or glare ice, the thin, fast-forming layer of ice that can be nearly invisible on pavement. It tends to form on bridges and in intersections.

4. Drive smoothly. Avoid steering, accelerating or braking suddenly. In icy conditions your car’s tires are often at their limit for traction. The slightest disturbance, like an abrupt turn or a too-hard tap on the brakes can cause a skid, and slick roads make recovering control especially difficult even for skilled drivers.

5. Look far ahead. While you are looking for areas where black ice could be hiding, take note of what other vehicles are doing. If they are moving slowly it may mean conditions are especially slippery ahead. If they are sliding sideways, well, you know what that means.

We invite each of you to help make the University an accident and injury free workplace. Thank you.

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