A Science Service Feature

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? WHY THE WEATHER ?

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ICY STREETS

Certain weather combinations in winter make the ground so slippery that even chickens can't get about without using their wings, and auto accidents and broken legs are in order.

A crusty or icy layer on top of snow usually breaks through and is not so bad as ice on bare pavements. If there is no snow on the ground already, an ice storm, or rain freezing as it falls, produces extreme slipperiness. Sometimes, when snow is changing to rain, enterprising house-owners make the mistake of shovelling their walks too promptly. When the snow is cleared away, the rain may make a coat of glaze on the cold sidewalk, while if the snow had not been shovelled off, the rain would have mixed with the snow and both could have been removed together.

Another bad sequence is cold weather and dry snow, followed by a thaw. Streets are not very slippery until the thaw begins, then the water from the melting snow above seeps through and freezes on the cold street surface beneath, making an icy layer which outlasts the snow.

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