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Ice safety before the spring melt

East Lansing, Mich., February 2020—Snowmobiling is a fun, family activity enjoyed by millions, but it takes precautions and knowledge to keep it safe for everyone. The American Council of Snowmobile Associations (ACSA) has suggestions on how to stay safe while riding, especially on ice.

“Since ice and snow go hand-in-hand, there’s a potential for dangers to be hidden under the snow that could be detrimental to snowmobiles and riders. Always be certain of a safe route before crossing lakes and rivers and keep an eye out for logs, rocks, cracks and ice heaves that can appear suddenly,” said ACSA President Scott Herzog.

In areas that have experienced fluctuating temperatures, be wary of ice and shore separation, the quality of the ice, ice melt and moving water. In fact, in seasons with extreme weather fluctuation, the safest course might be to avoid using bodies of water for travel.

Other things to look out for while crossing water include pressure ridges, thin ice and open water. Slow down since turning and stopping is more difficult on ice and be extremely vigilant in night time crossings. Be sure not to override your headlights, meaning going so fast that you pass through the area lit up by your headlights before you can safely stop. Always slow down when snowmobiling at night.

The easiest way to stay safe on a snowmobile is to pay attention to snow reports, weather conditions, your surroundings and use your common sense.

“When it comes to ice – if you don’t know, don’t go,” said Herzog.

Visit www.saferiderssafetyawareness.org for more snowmobile safety information.

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