Headline: Tricks to keep windshield free of ice

Deckhead: Ways to possibly skip scraping and see road ahead

Waking up to a frost-laden windshield is a disheartening way for commuters to begin a day – particularly if they’re running late.

It’s a scenario too familiar. The windshield is covered and the wiper blades are stuck to the glass. It’s a hinderance that’s going to take ample time to clear. Driving with iced-up windows is dangerous and against the law in many states.

Removing the ice is a two-step process. Turn on the vehicle’s defrosters and begin scraping the windshield, back window, door and windows and rearview mirrors.

Auto-glass experts recommend using a proper ice scraper or deicer to avoid damaging the glass. Use a pump-oriented deicer spray rather than an aerosol if it’s a commercial brand.

Only use the ice scraper on the windows. You risk damaging the finish and exposing metal surfaces on any surface other than the windows. You also could damage the finish and expose metal surfaces to corrosion by trying to scrape snow or ice off painted surfaces.

It’s unwise to attempt to melt the ice from your windshield by pouring hot water on it. Glass has a hard texture, but it’s not flexible enough to permit rapid uneven expansion. Thermal shock could shatter it. And always avoid turning on the windshield wipers before they are freed of snow and ice.

Drivers also could cover the windshield. It’s an alternative to scraping. The shrouds are relatively inexpensive and many are durable enough to handle anything that is dumped on them. Some have magnetic edges that quickly attach. Others, like FrostGuard, feature a security panel that can be dropped between the door jamb and window to prevent theft, making it ideal for parking lots and public places. Try placing a piece of cardboard or a plastic tablecloth over the windshield and secure it with the wipers.

Scraping ice off the side mirrors can be challenging. Cover them with large zip-lock bags or a plastic grocery bag to prevent ice from forming.

The most irritating frost forms inside the windshield. It’s caused by humid air inside the vehicle that comes in contact with a cold windshield. Frost easily can form. Wet clothing, a steaming mug of coffee or tracking snow or water into the vehicle all contribute to the issue.

Regulating the temperature and humidity inside the vehicle are key to preventing it. Be sure the intake vents at the base of the windshield are free of ice and snow and lower a window to allow cold, dry air into the car. Brush off as much snow and ice as possible before entering the vehicle and remove wet mats and let them dry overnight. Turn off the HVAC system’s recirculating setting and set the vents to the fresh-air position when driving to keep the windows from fogging.

Don’t forget to remove any snow that’s on the top of your vehicle and on the hood. Snow can fall onto your windshield or could blow onto other vehicle’s windshields, decreasing visibility. Keeping your windshield clean will make it easier to see road conditions ahead.

Cutline: FRIGID CONDITIONS – Drivers should make sure they pull the wiper blades from an ice-covered windshield before turning on the wipers. Image: remik44992. Adobe Stock.