

# THE OREGON WINTER DRIVING GUIDE

*Oregon's beautiful  
scenery is a year-round  
source of enjoyment.  
Driving in Oregon's  
winters, however, can  
be challenging. Follow  
these recommendations  
so you arrive safely at  
your destination!*

## Be Prepared!

*Use this handy checklist to make sure  
you're prepared every time you take a trip  
in Oregon's winter wonderland.*

- Tools: jack, lug wrench, shovel
- Chains or traction tires
- Flares
- Road maps
- Extra warm clothes, boots, hat and gloves
- Ice scraper and snow brush
- Cell phone and car adapter
- Rechargeable flashlight
- First aid kit
- Matches or lighter
- Battery jumper cables
- Extra food and water
- Blanket/sleeping bag(s)
- Paper towels
- Pocket knife
- Extra washer fluid

**Drive Safely. The Way to Go.**

## KNOW BEFORE YOU GO!

Before you go, visit [www.TripCheck.com](http://www.TripCheck.com) or call the numbers below for the latest in road conditions, weather forecast, chain requirements, and incident information.

5-1-1

*(if available from your cell phone service provider)*

1-800-977-6368

or 1-503-588-2941



*The Oregon Winter Driving Guide is a collaborative project of the Governor's Transportation/Tourism Task Force.*

Production assistance provided by:



[www.TravelOregon.com](http://www.TravelOregon.com)

Special thanks to:



And the following partners:

Oregon Association of  
Convention & Visitors Bureaus

Oregon State Police

Oregon Lodging Association

AAA Oregon

## TAKE YOUR TIME . . .

- Check Oregon's road conditions and weather forecasts at [www.TripCheck.com](http://www.TripCheck.com) before you leave, or call 5-1-1 for valuable travel information, updated continuously.
- Choose main routes and be rested and alert.
- Make someone aware of your routes, and if plans change, let someone know. Check in when you've reached your destination.

- Remember, cell phone coverage is not available in many remote areas.

- Keep your gas tank at least half full.

- Clear any snow, ice or frost from windows, lights, hood, heater and air inlet vents (don't forget mirrors and wipers).

- Do not drive with heater in recirculation mode; it can increase humidity.

- Drive with your lights on and reduce your speed.



## USE THESE TIPS TO PREVENT SLIPS

Adjust your driving for the conditions; if there is ice or snow on the road, you must take extra care.

- Don't use cruise control in wet, icy or snowy weather.

- Position your hands on the steering wheel at 9 o'clock and 3 o'clock, or lower.

- If you lose traction, gradually slow down — don't slam on the brakes!

- Steering, braking and accelerating smoothly are key to maximum vehicle control on slippery surfaces. Steer just enough to follow the path you intend (most people steer too much or too fast).

- Be ready to handle potentially dangerous situations by thinking "15 seconds" ahead about your options, such as controlling your speed, changing lanes or communicating with others on the road.

- Use extra caution when driving on bridges or concrete highways: ice forms first on these surfaces.

- Avoid driving through snowdrifts; they may cause you to lose control of your vehicle.

- Slow down in advance of shaded areas (especially curves) where ice and snow are the last to melt.

- Chain up early.

## TUNE UP YOUR VEHICLE

- Make sure your antifreeze is good to -25F; check and fill washer and other fluids and make sure hoses aren't loose or brittle.

- Keep wipers clean and in good condition.

- Make sure your heater and defroster are working.

- Make certain your battery is fully charged (also check battery age and make sure cables are not loose or corroded).

- Ensure your tires are in good condition and properly inflated.

- Carry chains or use traction tires.



## WATCH OUT FOR PLOWS!

In Oregon's winters, you will encounter snowplows and sanding trucks.

- Following a plow or sander too closely can be dangerous — give them (and yourself) room!

- Don't pass the plow or sander; be patient!
- Be aware that sometimes plows work side-by-side to clear the road faster.




## FOLLOW OREGON CHAIN LAWS

Oregon's chain laws apply to all roads and highways.

- Look for signs indicating when chains or traction tires are required. When required, pull over to the right of the highway as far as possible or pull into a "chain up" area.

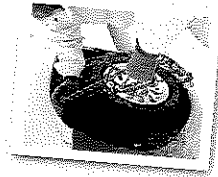
- Chains include link and cable chains and other devices that attach to the vehicle, wheel, or outside of the tire that are designed to increase traction in ice or snow.

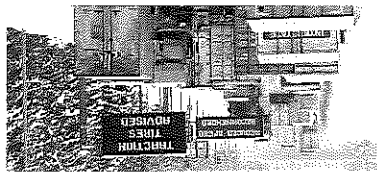
- A traction tire is a studded tire or a tire that meets the tire industry's definition as suitable for use in severe snow conditions, marked with .

- Studded tires can only be used between Nov. 1 and April 1.

- Under some conditions, four-wheel and all-wheel drive vehicles may be exempt from the requirement to use chains.

- Find out more about chain requirements at [www.TripCheck.com](http://www.TripCheck.com).



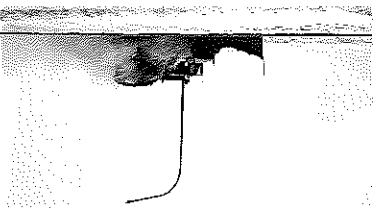


avalanche control.

- Unprepared drivers going too fast. Most of the time, the pass is closed to remove blocking vehicles. Don't be the one who closes the road for everyone else.
- Avalanche control. Usually scheduled at night when traffic is light. Advanced notice is given when possible, but sometimes safety concerns require quick action. During periods of heavy snowfall, daytime closures also may be necessary.
- Heavy snow. When heavy snow accumulates in a short amount of time, road crews may close a pass to clear the roads or perform avalanche control.

### The Pass is Closed? Why?

- Remember, a snowplow driver has a limited field of vision. Stay back 15 car lengths until you're sure it is safe to pass or until the plow pulls off the road.
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- Avalanche control. Usually scheduled at night when traffic is light. Advanced notice is given when possible, but sometimes safety concerns require quick action. During periods of heavy snowfall, daytime closures also may be necessary.
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Washington Administrative Code 204-24-050: Exception for all-wheel-drive vehicles. When "chains" are exempt from the chain requirement when all wheels are in gear and are equipped with approved traction devices as specified in WAC 204-24-040 provided that tire chains for at least one set of drive tires are carried in the vehicle.

Washington allows studded tires Nov. 1 through March 31. All drivers must follow Washington's roadway laws. There is no individual exception to the studded tire law. WSDOT may extend the deadline if forecasts indicate severe winter weather conditions are likely across much of the state.

### Studded Tire Information

- Studded tires do NOT meet the chain requirement. Even vehicles equipped with studded tires need to carry chains.
- Carry chains. Find out which chains fit your vehicle and practice installing them.\*
- Road flares
- Jumper cables
- Ice scraper/snowbrush
- Tire chains

### Winter Travel: On the Road

- Load your car with winter travel gear:
- Ice scraper/snowbrush
- Jumper cables
- Road flares
- Carry chains. Find out which chains fit your vehicle and practice installing them.\*
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- Call 511 for travel information and mountain pass conditions
- Program your radio to WSDOT's Highway Advisory Radio: 530 AM and 1610 AM
- WSDOT Winter Information: [wsp.wa.gov/winter](http://wsp.wa.gov/winter)
- WSDOT Newsroom: [wsp.wa.gov/news](http://wsp.wa.gov/news)
- Mountain Pass Reports: [wsp.wa.gov/traffic/mountain-passes](http://wsp.wa.gov/traffic/mountain-passes)
- Cameras and Traffic Alerts: [wsp.wa.gov/traffic](http://wsp.wa.gov/traffic)
- Weather: [wsp.wa.gov/traffic/weather](http://wsp.wa.gov/traffic/weather)

Approved Alternative Traction Devices: "Autosocks" also are an approved alternative traction device for passenger vehicles and commercial vehicles with less than five axes when chains are required. Consult your owner's manual for manufacturer recommendations. <http://www.wsp.wa.gov/traveler/traffic.htm>

Follow us on Twitter or Facebook for mountain-pass updates, traffic reports and other winter-travel information. Subscribe to email or text alerts. Learn more at: [wsp.wa.gov/inform](http://wsp.wa.gov/inform)

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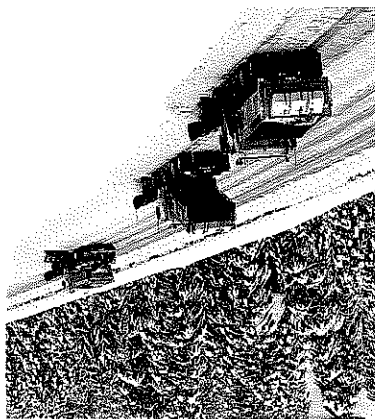
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Weather: [wsp.wa.gov/traffic/weather](http://wsp.wa.gov/traffic/weather)



- Keep your fuel tank full – don't let it fall below half a tank in winter weather.
- Flashlight
- Batteries
- Blanket
- Gloves/boots
- Water/snacks
- First aid kit

Winter travel can be tough on you and your car. Are you prepared? Make sure you:

- Get that maintenance check-up. Don't wait to check your tires, battery, belts, hoses, radiator, lights, brakes, heater/defroster and wipers.
- Talk to your tire dealer about which tires are the best match for your car and your travel.

### Winter Travel: Prepare, Equip, Fill up

In extreme weather conditions, the advisory may indicate chains are required on four- and all-wheel-drive vehicles. Please remember, studded tires do not meet the chain requirement.

When you see this, all vehicles must have approved tire chains, except four- and all-wheel-drive vehicles.

Approved traction tires must have at least an eighth of an inch of tread and be labeled M+S, All Season, or have a Mountain/Snowflake symbol. These tires can be used all year. When you install approved chains, any tire becomes a traction tire. For more information on traction tire options, contact your local tire dealer.

Traction Tires Required: When you see this, all passenger vehicles must have approved traction tires. And, chains are required on all vehicles with a gross vehicle weight rating greater than 10,000 pounds, including large passenger trucks and SUVs.

Traction Tires Advised: When you see this, oversized loads are prohibited from roadways. For Commercial Vehicle Services and load information, visit [wsp.wa.gov/commercialvehicle](http://wsp.wa.gov/commercialvehicle).

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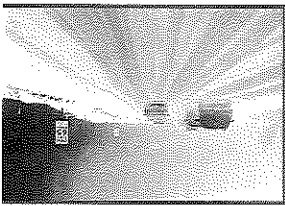
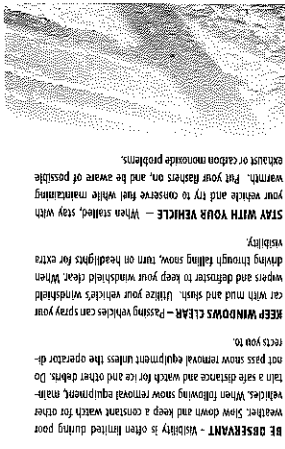
## 2014-2015

Washington State Department of Transportation

### WHAT'S INSIDE

- How to prepare for winter driving
- What to carry on winter trips
- Tires and chains
- Roadway advisories





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**KEEP WINDOWS CLEAR** - Passing vehicles can spray you car with mud and dust. Wipe your vehicle's windshield dry with a wiper blade. Turn on headlights for extra visibility.

**STAY WITH YOUR VEHICLE** - When stalled, stay with your vehicle and try to conserve fuel while maintaining warmth. Put your heaters on, and be aware of possible exhaust or carbon monoxide problems.

have to stop. Black ice is nearly invisible. Drive cautiously. By handspins, or with a nearby source of water, can also be used to melt snow.

**SAFETY LITERATURE** - Sand or kitty litter can help with traction should you get stuck in mud or snow.

**SPARE KEY** - Many motorists have locked themselves out of their cars when stopping to put on the chains.

**BROOM** - A small broom of brush can be used to clear snow off your vehicle.

**SHOVEL** - To free your vehicle should you get snowed in, use a shovel to clear snow from around the tires.

**ICE SCRAPERS/DEICERS** - To keep windows clear of snow/ice for improved visibility.

**GLOVES** - Helpful to protect hands from the cold when installing chains.

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**FLASHLIGHT** - With extra batteries.

**ALLOW ENOUGH TIME** - This is the mountains can take longer during winter, especially if you encounter storm conditions or roads. Get an early start and allow plenty of time to get to your destination.

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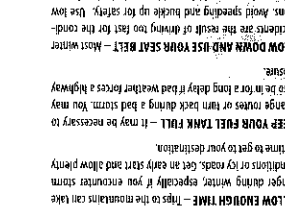
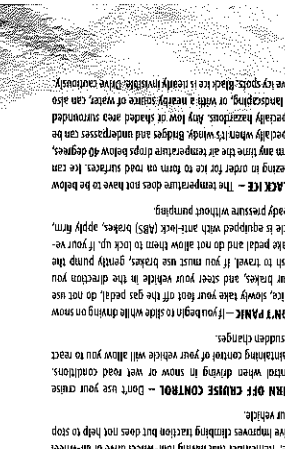
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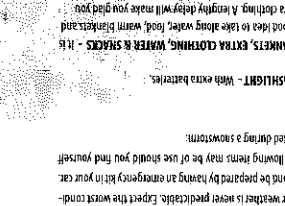
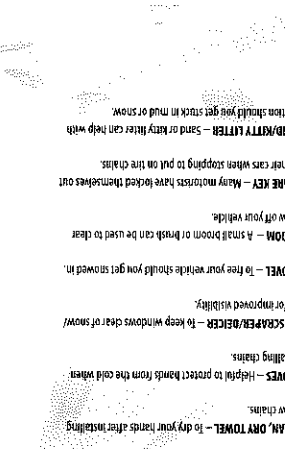
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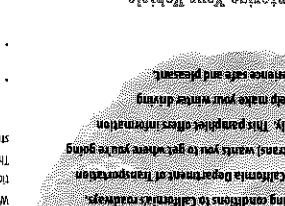
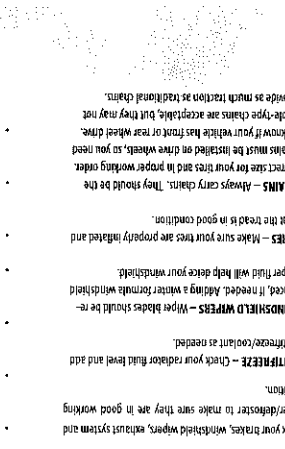
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**ALLOW ENOUGH TIME** - This is the mountains can take longer during winter, especially if you encounter storm conditions or roads. Get an early start and allow plenty of time to get to your destination.

**KEEP YOUR FUEL TANK FULL** - It may be necessary to change routes or turn back during a bad storm. You may also be in for a long delay if bad weather forces a highway closure.

**SLOW DOWN AND USE YOUR SEAT BELT** - Most winter accidents are the result of driving too fast for the conditions. Avoid speeding and buckle up for safety. Use low-gear to slow your vehicle - avoid using the brakes if possible. Remember that having four-wheel drive or all-wheel drive does not improve climbing traction but does help to stop your vehicle.

**TURN OFF CRUISE CONTROL** - Don't use your cruise control when driving in snow or wet road conditions. Maintaining control of your vehicle will allow you to react to sudden changes.

**BLACK ICE** - The temperature does not have to be below freezing in order for ice to form on road surfaces. Ice can form any time the air temperature drops below 40 degrees, especially when the wind whips and underpasses can be by handspins, or with a nearby source of water, can also be used to melt snow.



## Road Conditions

Telephone: 511

On the Internet: [www.nvroads.com](http://www.nvroads.com)

**NDOT Headquarters**  
General Information  
(775) 888-7000  
[www.nevadadot.com](http://www.nevadadot.com)

Las Vegas – District 1  
(702) 385-6500

**Tonopah Maintenance Station**  
(775) 482-2375

Reno – District 2  
(775) 834-8300

Elko – District 3  
(775) 777-2700

**Winnemucca Maintenance Station**  
(775) 623-8000

**Ely Maintenance Station**  
(775) 289-1700

**NHP Headquarters**  
(775) 684-4867  
[www.dps.nv.gov/nhp](http://www.dps.nv.gov/nhp)  
**NHP Regional Offices:**

**Reno NHP**  
(775) 688-2500 (ext. 0)

**Elko NHP**  
(775) 753-1111

**Las Vegas NHP**  
(702) 486-4100 (ext. 0)

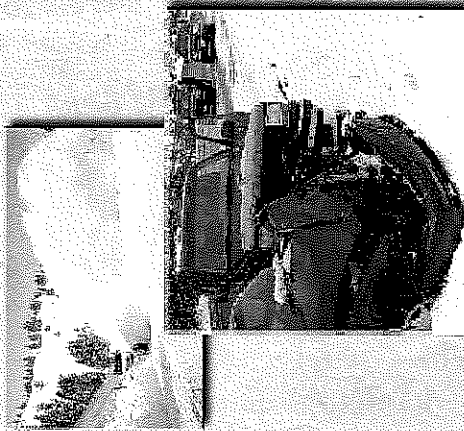
Nevada Department of  
Transportation



Nevada Highway Patrol



## Nevada Traction Device Requirements



Governor Brian Sandoval  
State of Nevada

Rudy Malfabon, PE., Director  
Nevada Department of Transportation

James Wright, Director  
Nevada Department of Public Safety

Dennis Osborn, Chief  
Nevada Highway Patrol

## Nevada Chain Requirements Revised October 1, 2014



NRS 484.645 requires the use of chains or snow tires on motor vehicles driven on any street or highway under icy or snowy conditions when the highway is marked or posted with signs requiring the use of chains or snow tires.

NRS 484.643 requires operators of all vehicles of more than 10,000 pounds (GVW) to install chains when chains or snow tire requirements are in effect.

Vehicles over 10,000 pounds (GVW) are permitted in chain control areas when equipped with chains or Automatic Traction Devices (ATD) on drive axles. Trailer axles must be chained as indicated.

Studded snow tires are permitted between October 1 and April 30. However, retractable studded snow tires (NRS 484.6425) may be used at any time but only with the studs retracted between May 1 – September 30.

Snow tires have special tread to enhance traction and bear a permanent sidewall label consisting of the words "mud and snow" or an abbreviation using a combination of the letters "M" and "S". Minimum tread depth for mud and snow tires is 3/16". Trucks with cable-type chains are legal in Nevada. However, these trucks may be restricted at times due to local conditions.

The Nevada Department of Transportation and the Nevada Highway Patrol reserve the right to prohibit any vehicle from entering a chain control area when it is determined the vehicle will experience difficulty in safely traveling the area.

- LEGEND**
- Driving axle      — Non-driving axle
  - Wheel with chains      □ Wheel with no chains
  - ◆ Drive axle must be chained      ▲ Chains on trailers may be staggered front and back
  - May require chains on all drive wheels if conditions warrant      ● Only 1 axle is necessary to be chained inside or outside

- NOTES**
- All vehicles, including four-wheel drive vehicles, that are towing trailers must have chains on one drive axle.
  - Trailers with brakes must have chains on the braking axle.
  - Front wheel drive vehicles must have chains on front (drive) axle.
  - On any semi-trailer, only one set of chains is required regardless of number of axles.
  - Chains are not required on tag axle.
  - Acceptable on either axle of semi-trailers.

