



WINTER TRAVEL NEWS PACKET WINTER 2011 – 2012



[Winter Driving Guide online](#)

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What's inside

Before you drive

- Know before you go – winter traveler information
- Traction tires: you have options
- Practice chaining up before you slip 'n' slide
- Be prepared for stormy driving conditions!
- Reminder: your driveway snow can't go on the road...
- Here's the scoop on Sno-Park permits

On the road

- Take your time driving in the rain
- Tips for driving safely in our Pacific Northwest fog
- Safety alert: watch for ice on bridges, overpasses
- Invisible danger: black ice. Be aware!
- Keep a safe distance from plows and sanders
- Use headlights in winter! Be seen!
- Low visibility requires caution
- Power failures can affect highway systems
- Safe bicycle commuting in winter conditions

How ODOT helps

- Tips and resources for commercial vehicle drivers
- Snow Zone signs tell you what's required
- Maintenance minimizes impacts on natural resources

Reporting road hazards

- Road and weather condition numbers



Know Before You Go!

Remember, it is against the law in Oregon to use handheld devices such as cell phones while driving.
Please, when driving, pay attention to the task at hand!

Winter driving information in the ODOT News Room:

www.oregon.gov/ODOT/COMM/winterdriving.shtml

Crash statistics for Oregon:

www.oregon.gov/ODOT/TD/TDATA/car/CAR_Publications.shtml

ODOT winter maintenance photos and videos:

www.flickr.com/oregondot/
www.youtube.com/OregonDOT

On Twitter (@oregondot):

twitter.com/OregonDOT

Winter driving tips brochure available online in English and in Spanish:

www.oregon.gov/ODOT/COMM/winterdriving.shtml



Flickr photo set

Oregon's weather can change quickly and without warning. For road conditions in Oregon, call 511 or (800) 977-ODOT (6368). Outside Oregon, dial (503) 588-2941. Reports are updated continuously and available 24 hours a day.

Visit TripCheck.com for information on road and weather conditions, incidents and traffic delays. Links to cameras on many mountain passes and major routes give real-time views of road conditions. The site also provides links to bus, train and airport information as well as lodging, Sno-Parks, restaurants, attractions and other traveler services.

For questions about winter road maintenance or other issues, contact ODOT at (888) ASK ODOT.





Know before you go — winter travel information

For more information:

Glen Hammer
TripCheck Program Manager
(503) 986-3977
glen.a.hammer@odot.state.or.us

Additional resources:

www.TripCheck.com
www.TripCheck.com/mobile

YouTube — Oregon's TripCheck.com

[www.youtube.com/
oregonDOT#p/u/15/wvIzbKqd9Bc](http://www.youtube.com/oregonDOT#p/u/15/wvIzbKqd9Bc)

ODOT Radio News

[www.oregon.gov/ODOT/COMM/
docs/TripCheck_Holiday08.mp3](http://www.oregon.gov/ODOT/COMM/docs/TripCheck_Holiday08.mp3)

[www.oregon.gov/ODOT/COMM/
docs/TripCheck_Podcast_2010.mp3](http://www.oregon.gov/ODOT/COMM/docs/TripCheck_Podcast_2010.mp3)

Winter Driving brochure:

[www.oregon.gov/ODOT/COMM/
docs/WinterDrivingGuideFINAL.pdf](http://www.oregon.gov/ODOT/COMM/docs/WinterDrivingGuideFINAL.pdf)

In Spanish: [www.oregon.gov/
ODOT/COMM/docs/WinterDriving-
GuideSP.pdf](http://www.oregon.gov/ODOT/COMM/docs/WinterDriving-GuideSP.pdf)

The Oregon Department of Transportation offers three easy ways to get the latest traveler information: from your computer, by phone, and on cable television (in certain areas).



From Your Computer

For up-to-date travel conditions via the Internet, visit www.TripCheck.com, ODOT's travel information website.

TripCheck Mobile

Detailed maps updated in real time display road conditions and trouble spots, including weather, construction, maintenance and traffic incidents. TripCheck also displays high impact incidents (Alerts!) on multiple pages to make them easier to spot.



TripCheck provides more than 260 camera images from urban areas, mountain passes and other key locations throughout Oregon, as well as southern Washington and northern California. Users can create and bookmark multiple custom camera pages with up to 10 different cameras in each for quick checks of specific routes.

A color-coded speed map of the Portland area provides average travel speeds on Portland highways.

TripCheck also has links to bus, airport, train, bicycle and trucking information; commercial roadside services such as hotels, motels and restaurants; and detailed information on scenic byways, safety rest areas and Sno-Parks. A mileage calculator lets users estimate distances and choose the most direct route. TripCheck also provides detailed information on the use of traction tires and chains in Oregon.

With more than 1.6 million visitors per month, TripCheck.com provides valuable road and weather information to enhance safety around the state.

By Phone

TripCheck is available in a special format for mobile devices such as cell phones and Personal Digital Assistants. Visit www.tripcheck.com/mobile for a handy menu of TripCheck features, all formatted for the smaller screen size of mobile devices. Besides incidents, alerts and cameras, TripCheck Mobile provides handy links to directly dial hotels and restaurants along Oregon highways. TripCheck mobile also has a handy large screen format for phones like Apple's iPhone.

TripCheck information is now also available in text format via Twitter. Visit TripCheck.com and click on the Twitter page to learn more.

To hear the latest conditions, travelers in Oregon can dial 511 to access the same immediate road and weather information available on TripCheck. Users can select updated reports about driving conditions by highway, mountain

pass or major city from easy-to-use menus. The 511 system responds to both voice and touch-tone commands.

Calls to 511 are local calls when dialed from a pay phone or wire line phone. Wireless (cell) phone users are responsible for airtime and roaming charges according to their wireless service contracts, but ODOT does not impose any additional charges.

Most wireless companies in Oregon provide 511 service. If you cannot use 511, call toll-free (800) 977-ODOT (6368) for road and weather information. Outside Oregon, dial (503) 588-2941. Oregon's 511 service also offers the feature of forwarding users to the California, Idaho, Nevada and Washington 511 systems for road conditions in those states.

Remember, in Oregon, you are allowed to use hands-free devices, but not texting devices or touch cell phones while driving. ODOT encourages motorists to pull off the road and park in a safe area before using cell phones.

On Cable TV

Corvallis and Bend cable subscribers can check road and weather information instantly on television.

Bend Broadband customers can view road and weather information from selected cameras as well as live video feeds. Morning commuters in Corvallis get TripCheck information via their local cable system.

All of our cameras in the Portland area can be viewed in motion at TripCheck.com.

Remember: **Know Before You Go!** Visit www.TripCheck.com.

ODOT



Traction tires: you have options

For more information:

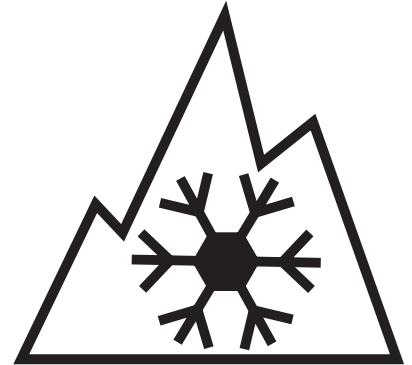
Dave Thompson
Public Information Officer
(503) 731-8263
david.h.thompson@odot.state.or.us

Additional resources:

TripCheck.com
www.tripcheck.com/Pages/RMap.asp?mainNav=RoadConditions&staticNav=TractionTires

Oregon state law allows motorists to use studded tires from Nov. 1 through March 31. Because studded tires damage Oregon highways, ODOT encourages drivers to consider using chains or non-studded traction tires.

Studless traction tires that meet Rubber Manufacturers Association standards for use in severe snow conditions carry a special symbol on the tire sidewall: a three-peaked mountain and snowflake. Research shows these tires provide better traction than studded tires on bare pavement.



Studded tire facts

- You can use studded tires in Oregon from Nov. 1 through March 31. Driving with studded tires before Nov. 1 or after March 31 is a Class C violation and carries a \$190 fine.
- Research shows that studded tires are more effective than all-weather tires on icy roads, but are *less effective in most other conditions* because they may reduce traction between the road and the tire.
- Oregon spends more than \$11 million a year fixing roads and bridges damaged by studded tires.
- When it rains, water collects in the pavement ruts caused by studded tires and creates dangerous driving conditions. In cold weather, that water can freeze and cause extra-slippery roads.

Alternatives to studded tires

Chains and chain-like devices

- Chains are more effective than studded tires and are becoming easier to use.
- Link chains may not be recommended for use on some types of vehicles; check your owner's manual.

Other traction tires

- Traction tires, other than studded tires, provide increased traction in winter conditions.
- They work about as well as studded tires on ice, but work better than studded tires or regular tires in most other winter conditions.
- These other traction tires cause no more damage to road surfaces than regular tires.

Know Before you Go: Visit www.TripCheck.com, Oregon's travel information Web site, for up-to-the-minute road conditions and more information on Oregon's chain law and chain requirements. You can also get the latest in road conditions by calling 511.



Practice chaining up before you slip 'n' slide

For more information:

Dave Thompson
Public Information Officer
(503) 731-8263
david.h.thompson@odot.state.or.us

Additional resources:

www.TripCheck.com
www.tripcheck.com/Pages/RcMap.asp?mainNav=RoadConditions&staticNav=MinChainReqs

YouTube — How to install tire chains

www.youtube.com/oregonDOT#p/u/0/_8RVbDuyOcY

Flickr — Photo of chaining up

www.flickr.com/photos/oregondot/2928860021/in/set-72157607906187328/

ODOT Radio News — PSAs

www.oregon.gov/ODOT/COMM/docs/WinterPSAs_ODOTOSP.mp3

In Oregon, there are times when you may be required to use chains on snowy or icy roads. It's important to learn how to mount your chains before bad weather strikes.

Chaining up is good for both you and other drivers, especially on mountain roads. Travelers who wait until the last minute to put on chains can block lanes, delaying other drivers and making it difficult for crews to sand and plow the road. You'll do your part to keep traffic moving by putting your chains on early.

It's a lot easier to put chains on for the first time when you don't have to struggle to read the instructions alongside a snowy road. Practice installing your chains at home when the weather is fair. Then when road conditions require chains, you'll already know how to use them.



Here are some tips on chaining up and driving with chains:

- Check your vehicle operator's manual for the right type and size of chains to use. Then follow the manufacturer's installation instructions.
- Ensure chains are the proper size. Don't deflate tires to install chains.
- Don't wait until you lose control of your vehicle before chaining up.
- Pull over to a safe and level area to mount or remove chains.
- Carry a waterproof tarp or plastic sheet to help keep you dry.
- Keep children and pets safe in your car to avoid distraction and injury.
- Pull over in a safe place and retighten your tire chains after you have driven a short distance.
- Pull over and stop immediately if any part of your chain fails or comes loose.
- Don't drive faster than 30 miles per hour when using chains. Accelerate and decelerate slowly. Avoid spinning or locking your wheels.
- Remember: you can slide even with chains, so drive carefully and slowly.

Know Before you Go: Visit www.TripCheck.com, Oregon's travel information website, for up-to-the-minute road conditions and more information on Oregon's chain law and chain requirements. You can also get the latest in road conditions by calling 511.



Be prepared for stormy driving conditions

For more information:

Shelley Snow
Safety Public Information Officer
(503) 986-3438
shelley.m.snow@odot.state.or.us

Additional resources:

[Winter Driving brochure:](http://www.oregon.gov/ODOT/COMM/docs/WinterDrivingGuideFINAL.pdf)
www.oregon.gov/ODOT/COMM/docs/WinterDrivingGuideFINAL.pdf

Whenever there's a chance of stormy weather, the Oregon Department of Transportation encourages motorists to prepare their vehicles in advance and drive with extra caution.

Before traveling to areas that may have hazardous conditions, make sure your vehicle is ready:

- Ensure the heater and defroster are working properly.
- Test all lights. Carry spare light bulbs.
- Use antifreeze that's good to -25° F; check and fill washer and other fluids and make sure hoses aren't loose or brittle.
- Keep wipers clean and in good condition; fill the windshield washer tank.
- 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 for best traction, including your spare.
- Carry chains or use traction tires in winter.
- Keep an automotive safety kit in your vehicle.

If you are driving in areas that have ice or snow on the road, adjust your driving to fit conditions and remember these winter driving tips:

- Turn off your cruise control.
- If you lose traction and your vehicle feels like it's floating, gradually slow down. Don't slam on the brakes.
- Use caution when driving on bridges or concrete highways. These surfaces are the first to freeze and become slippery when the temperature drops.
- Slow down in advance of shaded areas, especially on curves. Shaded areas are cooler and may have ice that is difficult to see.
- Don't pass snowplows or sanders, and don't follow them too closely; they will pull over!
- Be prepared for slow traffic after a storm passes. It may take several hours to clear long lines of trucks waiting to cross a pass after a storm moves through the area. Also, it may take time to remove cars abandoned on the side of the road.

Make sure your vehicle is stocked with the following:

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

- Chains or traction tires
- A full fuel tank

If you travel with an infant or baby, pack extra food, warm clothes and blankets, toys and games, and extra diapers, just in case. Remember to use your child safety seat properly.

Before leaving, tell a family member or friend of your planned route and when you anticipate arriving. Keep them updated on any major route or arrival changes.

Know Before You Go: Visit www.TripCheck.com, Oregon's travel information website, for up-to-the-minute road conditions and more information on Oregon's chain law and chain requirements. You can also get the latest in road conditions by calling 511.

ODOT



Reminder: your driveway snow can't go in the road...

For more information:

Don Hamilton
Region 1 Public Information Officer
(503) 731-8265
don.b.hamilton@odot.state.or.us

The state highway is not a good place to deposit snow from your driveway. In fact, it's against the law to deposit any object onto Oregon highways and highway right of way, including snow.

Placing driveway snow on the road or shoulder creates a hazard for other highway users and for ODOT's snowplow operators. Chunks of snow and ice form an uneven road surface that can surprise drivers and cause crashes.

When snowplows create berms of snow at the end of driveways, ODOT asks property owners to help by shoveling that snow to the sides of their driveways, rather than back onto the road or shoulder.

If you shovel snow onto the roadway, you will be asked to clear it away. Or ODOT may remove the snow and bill you for the cost of doing so. In addition, you may be cited under Oregon law; violations are punishable as a misdemeanor under ORS 374.990.

ODOT



Here's the scoop on Sno-Park permits

For more information:

Karen Morrison
Maintenance Services Coordinator
(503) 986-3006
karen.j.morrison@odot.state.or.us

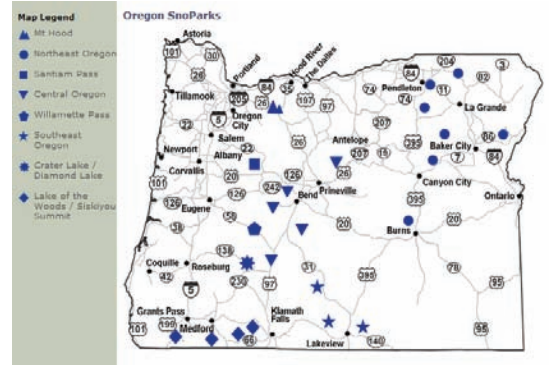
Additional resources:

TripCheck.com
www.tripcheck.com/Pages/SPentry.asp

[YouTube — Maintaining Sno-Parks](http://www.youtube.com/oregonDOT#p/u/20/zigKvm6dDUw)
www.youtube.com/oregonDOT#p/u/20/zigKvm6dDUw

www.OregonDMV.com
www.oregon.gov/ODOT/DMV/vehicle/sno_park_permits.shtml

From Nov. 1 - April 15 in Oregon, parking in a Sno-Park requires a valid permit displayed on your vehicle's windshield. There are about 100 Sno-Parks throughout the state located in all mountain passes and at most recognized ski, snowmobile and snow-play areas. A list of Sno-Parks is available at TripCheck.com under "Travel Center."



The Sno-Park program, established in 1977, helps pay for snow removal in these designated winter recreation parking locations. There are three types of Sno-Park permits:

- An annual permit is \$25.
- A three-day permit (valid for three consecutive days) is \$9.
- A one-day permit is \$4.

Sno-Park permits are sold at all Driver and Motor Vehicle Services offices and by permit agents at many sporting goods stores, winter resorts and other outlets. Businesses authorized by DMV to sell the permits may charge an additional service fee for each permit they sell. For information about becoming a Sno-Park permit sales agent, contact DMV Vehicle Mail at (503) 945-7949.

Annual permits are also available by sending a written request with your return address, phone number and a check or money order to: DMV, Vehicle Mail No. 1, 1905 Lana Avenue N.E., Salem, OR, 97314.

Sno-Park permits issued in California and Idaho are honored in Oregon, and Oregon permits are honored in those states, with one exception. Washington only honors Oregon's annual Sno-Park permit.

Sno-Park fees are set by Oregon law. The Oregon Transportation Commission, with the advice of the Winter Recreation Advisory Committee, sets the fee to provide snow removal for a moderate snow season. The committee, representing snowmobile riders, cross-country skiers, ski area operators and the public, also recommends Sno-Park locations.

ODOT



Take your time driving in the rain

For more information:
Shelley Snow
Safety Public Information Officer
(503) 986-3438
shelley.m.snow@odot.state.or.us

Rain can create dangerous driving conditions: reduced visibility, reduced traction between tires and the road, and less predictable car handling. When it's raining, be cautious and give yourself more time to get where you are going. Also remember to:

- **Slow down, especially through high water.** Driving through several inches of water at high speed can cause you to lose control of the car; it could also splash water into the engine and stall it. Lowering your speed helps you prepare for sudden stops caused by disabled cars, debris and other wet-weather hazards.
- If it hasn't rained in a while, expect road surfaces to be slick when it does start raining. Engine oil and grease build up on the road over time. When mixed with water from rain, the road can become slick. The first few hours of a fresh rain can be the most dangerous.
- Turn on your headlights to improve visibility. Disengage your cruise control.
- Keep your distance. A car needs two to three times more stopping distance on wet roads.



Maintain your vehicle during wet weather

The most common vehicle problems in wet weather involve wipers, brakes, tires and defrosters.

- Before heading out in wet weather, **check your wipers** for signs of damage. Replace wiper blades regularly. Make sure your defroster is functioning properly, especially if you haven't used it in a while.
- **Check your brakes.** After driving through a puddle, check that brakes are working properly by tapping them gently a few times.
- **Check your tires.** Make sure tires are in good condition and are at the recommended inflation level. Tires should have at least 1/32 of an inch tread depth at any two adjacent grooves, the minimum allowable by law. Driving on over-inflated or under-inflated tires is dangerous on wet pavement.

Watch for hydroplaning conditions

Hydroplaning occurs when your front tires ride on a film of water. It can occur at speeds as low as 35 miles per hour, especially if tires are worn. If you hydroplane, ease off the gas, gently apply the brakes and steer straight ahead.

November and December are busy months for crashes

Travelers on Oregon roads experience the most crashes every year in December, with an average of 4,267 crashes across the state. November is close behind, averaging 3,987 crashes. Rain in the western part of the state contributes to uncertain road conditions, as does snow in the higher elevations and high desert. Be extra alert in the winter months!



Tips for driving safely in our Pacific Northwest fog

For more information:
Michele O'Leary
ODOT Transportation Safety
(503) 986-4198
michele.oleary@odot.state.or.us

Thick fog is a common winter driving hazard. When you are driving in fog, you should slow down to adjust to the reduced visibility. In the most severe situations, a *Dense Fog Advisory* will be issued if visibility is reduced to less than one-quarter mile. Check www.TripCheck.com for more information, and follow these safety tips:

- Slow down. Disengage your cruise control. Most crashes occur because the driver is going too fast for weather conditions.
- Use your low beams. High beams will reflect back thick fog, making visibility worse for you and other drivers.
- Keep your car headlights clean. Get in the habit of wiping off your lights at the gas station; that way you're ready for low-visibility conditions.
- Keep the view clear. Avoid fogged windows by regularly using the defroster and windshield wipers. Moisture can build up on the windshield both inside and out.
- Minimize distractions. Turn off the music and don't talk on your cell phone, so you can listen for traffic you cannot see.
- Increase following distance to ensure enough time to stop safely.
- Watch for emergency stops by other vehicles; watch for slow-moving and parked vehicles.
- Use the right edge of the road, white fog line or roadside reflectors as a guide. Do not change lanes or pass other vehicles unless necessary.
- If you pull off the road, pull over as far as possible, turn off your headlights and turn on your hazard lights.

ODOT



Safety alert: watch for ice on bridges, overpasses

For more information:
Tom Strandberg
Region 5 Public Information Officer
(541) 963-1330
thomas.m.strandberg@
odot.state.or.us

Bridges and overpasses are the most dangerous parts of the road in the winter. They are the first to freeze and the last to thaw because they're built of concrete, which doesn't retain as much heat as other materials. There is no land beneath the structure to provide warmth, and wind passes both above and below bridges, keeping them chilled. To be safe, when driving on roads that may be icy, remember the following:



- Turn off your cruise control, be alert and drive cautiously.
- Roads that are wet or have fresh snow, packed snow, or ice have varying degrees of traction. Adjust your speed to match road conditions.
- Increase your distance from vehicles in front of you. Allow about three times as much space as usual.
- If your vehicle suddenly feels like it's floating, gradually slow down. Don't slam on your brakes.
- Changes in elevation can drastically affect road and weather conditions. Watch for icy spots, especially in shaded corners.
- Avoid driving through snowdrifts — they may cause your vehicle to spin out of control.
- Blowing powder or dry snow can limit your visibility, especially when approaching or following trucks or snowplows. Keep your distance to avoid being blinded by blowing snow.

After a storm has passed, you should remain cautious, especially on bridges and overpasses. Maintenance crews will be out to clear roads as soon as possible, but the snow and ice may not melt right away.

Snowy, icy roads hold danger

In 2009, at least 31 people died and more than 1,400 were injured in crashes that occurred on snowy or icy roads in Oregon. There were more than 3,450 crashes in these conditions. Driving on slippery roads is unpredictable. Try to avoid travel when roads are snowy or icy, and if you must get out, be extra cautious.

ODOT



Invisible danger: black ice. Be aware!

For more information:
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Region 5 Public Information Officer
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thomas.m.strandberg@
odot.state.or.us

Black ice, also called glare ice or clear ice, is a thin layer of ice on the roadway. Any ice is dangerous to drive on, but black ice is worse because the road looks wet, not icy. Black ice isn't really black; it's so thin and transparent that the darker pavement shows through. It often has a matte appearance rather than the expected gloss.



Ice on the road prevents your tires from gripping, so steering is difficult and stopping is harder. That means four-wheel drive won't help much. Ordinary snow tires are designed for snow, not ice. Chains are the most helpful device for gaining traction on ice. But even with chains, stopping distance is still several times greater than on dry pavement with ordinary tires.

Black ice is most common at night and very early in the morning, when temperatures are typically their lowest. It is usually thin enough that it melts soon after sunlight hits it, but it can last much longer on shaded areas of roadways. Bridges and overpasses are danger spots: since they do not receive as much heat from the ground and lose more heat to the air, they can drop below freezing even when the rest of the roadway doesn't.

Ice forms on the road when the road surface temperature drops below freezing. The ground cools more slowly than the air and warms back more slowly as well, so even if the air temperature is above freezing, the roadway may still be frozen. This discrepancy between temperatures can lull drivers into a false sense of security: they hear the temperature on the morning news and think all's well, when the road is still frozen.

To avoid slipping on icy bridges and roads, remember these tips:

- Slow down and keep your distance from vehicles in front of you. Allow about three times as much space.
- Turn off your cruise control, be alert and drive cautiously to avoid ice on the road ahead.
- Look for signs of ice other than on the roadway: on windshield wipers, side view mirrors, road signs, trees or fences. If ice has formed on any of these things, it may be on the road.
- If your vehicle feels like it's floating, gradually slow down; don't slam on your brakes or you may skid out of control.

ODOT



Keep a safe distance from plows and sanders

For more information:
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Region 5 Public Information Officer
(541) 963-1330
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odot.state.or.us

In a contest between a snowplow and any other vehicle, the laws of physics virtually guarantee the snowplow will win.

Drivers who try to pass on the right when a snowplow is in operation run the risk of damaging their vehicles, hitting the snowplow or running off the road and into a snow bank or guardrail.

It is illegal to pass a snowplow on the right on state highways. On most Oregon highways, snowplows have "wing" plows that stick out more than eight feet from the right front edge of the truck. The snow being plowed or blown off the road can contain rocks and other debris that can damage vehicles.



Trying to pass a plow on the left also has its problems. The road behind the snowplow is in much better condition than the road ahead. If conditions are severe enough to require the attention of a snowplow, drivers should use extra care when trying to accelerate and pass other vehicles. Ruts in the snow can grab tires; icy conditions make it difficult to control any vehicle at higher speeds.

Drivers should give winter maintenance vehicles such as plows and sanders a wide berth. They do not travel at high speeds and other vehicles quickly overtake them. Plows and sanding trucks pull over periodically to let traffic pass. The best advice is to stay at least three car lengths behind and give yourself more time to get where you are going.

Know Before You Go: Visit www.TripCheck.com, Oregon's travel information website, for up-to-the-minute road conditions and more information on Oregon's chain law and chain requirements. You can also get the latest in road conditions by calling 511.

ODOT



Use headlights in winter!

Be seen!

For more information:

Shelley Snow
Safety Public Information Officer
(503) 986-3438
shelley.m.snow@odot.state.or.us

Turning on your low-beam headlights during the daytime in the winter months can help make your vehicle more visible to other drivers, bicyclists and pedestrians.

When natural light is low — at dawn or dusk or when it's raining, cloudy or snowing — you can improve your vehicle's visibility significantly by turning on your low-beam headlights. In fact, many newer vehicles come with daytime running lights so that anytime the vehicle is operating, the low-beam headlights are on to improve visibility.

Driving with your lights on during the day throughout the winter helps contrast your vehicle against buildings and other terrain features. Diminished visibility results when there is little contrast between the color of a vehicle and its background, such as a lightly colored car against snow or a green car against foliage. Small cars are harder to see at a distance compared to pickups and SUVs. Headlights also contribute to safety on highways with one lane of travel in each direction.

Improved visibility can help prevent crashes such as head-on collisions and sideswipes, as well as collisions with pedestrians and cyclists. Tests conducted by the Society of Automotive Engineers determined that with headlights off, drivers can see oncoming cars when they are an average of 2,074 feet away. With headlights on, that distance more than doubles to an average of 4,720 feet.

Also, remember to keep your car headlights clean. Get in the habit of wiping off your lights at the gas station; that way you're ready for low-visibility conditions.

ODOT



Low visibility requires caution

For more information:
Michele O'Leary
ODOT Transportation Safety
(503) 986-4198
michele.oleary@odot.state.or.us

Driving at night is more difficult because of reduced visibility. However, low visibility conditions often occur during the day, caused by heavy rain, thick fog, snowfall, dust or smoke. Follow these safety tips for driving in low visibility conditions:



- Slow down. Disengage your cruise control. Most crashes occur because the driver is going too fast for the weather conditions.
- Use your low beams. High beam lights will reflect back off the thick fog or snow, making visibility worse for you and other drivers.
- Avoid entering an area if you cannot see a safe distance ahead.
- If you suddenly encounter a severe loss of visibility, pull off the pavement as far as possible. Stop, turn off your lights, set the emergency brake and take your foot off the brake to be sure the taillights are not illuminated. Turn on your emergency flashers.
- If you can't pull off the roadway, slow down, turn on your low beam headlights and sound the horn occasionally. Use the white fog line or roadside reflectors if necessary to help guide you.
- Never stop in the travel lanes.

"Too fast" is too risky!

The third most common driver error causing crashes last year was "driving too fast for conditions." More than 10 percent of crashes had this error as the main reason for the crash. Every year, in fact, "driving too fast for conditions" shows up in the top five most common reasons for crashes. Slow down! You must make adjustments in your driving when road conditions have changed.

ODOT



Power failures can affect highway systems

For more information:

Don Hamilton
Region 1 Public Information Officer
(503) 731-8265
don.b.hamilton@odot.state.or.us

When coming upon an intersection with signal lights flashing or out, it's important to follow basic rules to keep yourself and other drivers safe. Traffic crashes and winter storms can cause power failures that affect signals. Here's what to do when traffic lights are not properly working:

- Treat the intersection as an all-way stop: Come to a full stop. Look both ways for other traffic and pedestrians; when it is safe, drive cautiously through the intersection.
- If there is other traffic, common courtesy requires that the driver who stops first goes first.
- If in doubt, yield to the driver on your right.

The most important thing to remember is to be courteous and careful. Never insist on the right of way at the risk of a crash.

Be alert at railroad crossings

Power outages also can affect railroad crossings. Railroad crossing signals have built-in backup battery power and should continue to operate for a short time during power outages. During a long-term power outage or other problem, railroad-crossing arms will automatically move to the "down" position. Railroad companies have standard procedures for these situations. Never drive around railroad-crossing arms in the down position. A train may be coming.

Use headlights for tunnels and bridges

It may be more difficult to see tunnel entrances and bridge approaches if there is a power outage. Use your headlights whenever there is reduced visibility and use caution.

Know Before You Go: Visit www.TripCheck.com, Oregon's travel information website, for up-to-the-minute road conditions and more information on Oregon's chain law and chain requirements. You can also get the latest in road conditions by calling 511.

ODOT



Safe bicycle commuting in winter conditions

For more information:
Jeff Monson
Commute Options Director
(541) 330-2647
jeff@commuteoptions.org

Additional resources:
www.commuteoptions.org

During the summer, bicycle commuting is a breeze, with warm days and long hours of sunshine. When the sun goes south for the winter, it doesn't necessarily mean solitary confinement for the Schwinn. With a few precautions, bicycling in the winter offers the same benefits as fair-weather cycling, such as saving gas money, reducing highway damage (and therefore costs!), and using one less car parking space. Bicycling is also good for your health and great for the environment! Here are some tips to make your winter bicycle commuting safe and successful:



Wear the right clothes, including:

- A good wind jacket over layers of clothing.
- A pair of wind pants or long underwear.
- Windproof mittens over insulating liners or gloves on milder days.
- A neck gaiter and warm hat under your bicycle helmet.
- A helmet cover with an ear band.

Use the right equipment, such as:

- A mountain bike with sturdy tires.
- A set of fenders.
- In icy conditions, studded bicycle tires.
- A bright halogen light on the front of your bike and a red light on the back.
- A reflective vest and reflective tape on your helmet and elsewhere.

ODOT

This information is provided by *Commute Options* for Central Oregon located in Bend. *Commute Options* promotes alternative transportation including walking, bicycling, carpooling, vanpooling, telecommuting and transit. Learn more at www.commuteoptions.org.



Tips and resources for commercial vehicle drivers

For more information:

David House
Motor Carrier Public
Information Officer
(503) 945-5270
david.j.house@odot.state.or.us

Additional resources:

YouTube — [Winter Truck Safety Tips](https://www.youtube.com/oregonDOT#p/u/26/-8b4Z715wOo)
[www.youtube.com/
oregonDOT#p/u/26/-8b4Z715wOo](https://www.youtube.com/oregonDOT#p/u/26/-8b4Z715wOo)

Winter weather conditions can make driving dangerous for anyone, but when you are driving a 53-foot long vehicle weighing as much as 105,500 pounds, slick roads and low visibility can be especially challenging. An average of 100 truck-involved crashes resulting in an injury or fatality occur in snowy or icy conditions in Oregon each year.



The Oregon Department of Transportation Motor Carrier Transportation Division understands that professional truck drivers have a very important job – and winter weather can make a tough job even more difficult. ODOT offers advice and resources, including a short video, to help drivers prepare for winter driving in Oregon.

“We want to help reduce winter weather-related truck crashes by providing some useful advice,” said MCTD Safety and Federal Programs Manager David McKane. “Safety is our number one priority at ODOT and we want drivers to know that we care about their safety, the safety of ODOT staff and the safety of the traveling public.”

Chaining up

- Chains are required in Oregon whenever winter conditions exist and SNOW ZONE signs are posted advising drivers to carry or use them. Oregon’s weather can change quickly and without warning. It’s a good idea to carry chains during the fall and winter months.
- Chain information including snow zone notices, chain requirements and diagrams are posted on Oregon’s travel information website, www.tripcheck.com. Snow zone notices and road condition information are also available by phone. From within Oregon, call 511 or 1-800-977-ODOT (6368). From outside Oregon, dial 503-588-2941.
- Know how to put your chains on. Practice installing them before your trip.
- Don’t wait until the last minute to chain up. Pull over to a safe level area such as a designated chain-up area. Wear reflective, warm clothing and lie with your legs pointed away from the travel lane.
- Drivers who disobey signs requiring chains are subject to citations and fines.

Safety tips

- Be prepared. Have an emergency kit, shovel, flares, extra food and water, etc.
- Inspect your vehicle before you get on the road. Make sure your wipers, lights, battery, tires and brakes are working properly.
- Allow more time to reach your destination. In severe weather, closures and crashes can cause long delays.
- Drive cautiously and wear your safety belt.

Resources

- **Winter safety for commercial vehicles video** - the short video posted on YouTube and ODOT's website (www.oregon.gov/ODOT/COMM/winter_truck_tips_video.shtml) features tips from ODOT Maintenance staff and May Trucking, an Oregon-based motor carrier with an above-average safety record.
- Pick up a **chain information card** at ports of entry or ODOT Motor Carrier offices.
- Oregon's **travel information website**, www.tripcheck.com has chain information, snow zone notices, road closures, emergency alerts, cameras showing mountain passes and highways around the state and you can sign up to receive automated traffic alerts via Twitter.
- More winter safety tips, including tips for passenger car drivers is available on ODOT's website, www.oregon.gov/ODOT/COMM/winterdriving.shtml.

ODOT



Snow Zone signs tell you what's required

For more information:

Karen Morrison
Maintenance Services Coordinator
(503) 986-3006
karen.j.morrison@odot.state.or.us

Additional resources:

TripCheck.com
www.tripcheck.com/Pages/RMap.asp?mainNav=RoadConditions&staticNav=ChainLaws

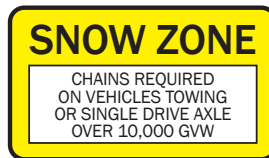
When you see a "Snow Zone" sign as you drive along Oregon's highways, you'll want to pay special attention: these signs provide valuable information during the winter months.

Snow zone signs let motorists know about the current requirements for using chains and traction tires. Lighted message signs or signs like these may be displayed throughout the winter months:



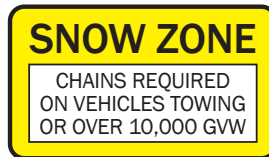
"Carry Chains or Traction Tires"

When signs say you must carry chains or traction tires, the chains or traction tires must be in or on your vehicle, and they must be the right size for your vehicle and of sufficient number to comply with the chain rules.



"Chains Required on Vehicles Towing or Single Drive Axle Over 10,000 GVW"

When this message is displayed, you must use chains if your vehicle is rated 10,000 pounds gross vehicle weight (GVW) or less and is towing, such as a pickup towing a boat; or is a single drive axle vehicle rated over 10,000 pounds GVW whether towing or not, such as a delivery truck. Chains must also be used on the trailer or vehicle being towed.



"Chains Required on Vehicles Towing or Over 10,000 GVW"

When this message is displayed, vehicles towing or rated for more than 10,000 pounds gross vehicle weight must use chains. Chains must also be used on a trailer or vehicle being towed if it has a brake that operates while in tow.



"Chains Required - Traction Tires Allowed on Vehicles Under 10,000 GVW"

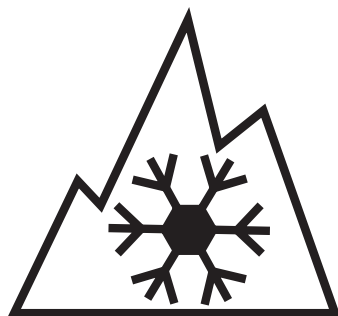
Vehicles towing or rated over 10,000 pounds GVW must use chains. Chains must also be used on a trailer or vehicle being towed if it has a brake that

operates while in tow. Vehicles rated 10,000 pounds GVW or less and that are not towing must use chains or traction tires.

“Chains” include link chains, cable chains or any other device that attaches to the wheel, vehicle or outside of the tire that is specifically designed to increase traction on ice and snow.

“Traction tires” are studded tires, retractable studded tires or other tires that meet tire industry standards for use in severe snow conditions.

Tires designated by the tire industry as suitable for use in severe snow conditions are marked with a symbol of a three-peaked mountain and a snowflake on the sidewall like this:



“Retractable studded tires” are tires with embedded studs that retract to at or below the wear bar of the tire and project not less than .04 inch beyond the tread surface of the tire when extended.

“Studded tires” are tires with studs that are made of a rigid material that wears at the same rate as the tire tread. The studs must extend at least .04 inch but not more than .06 inch beyond the tread surface. Studded tires are only legal for use in Oregon from November 1 through March 31.

Cars and light trucks must use chains on one tire on each side of the primary drive axle. Chains also must be on one tire on each side of one axle of a trailer or item being towed if it is equipped with a brake that operates while in tow. Traction tires may be used in place of chains when the car or light truck is rated less than 10,000 GVW and is not towing or being towed.

In most winter conditions, four-wheel and all-wheel-drive vehicles are exempt from the requirement to use chains if the vehicle is not towing, has an unloaded weight of 6,500 pounds or less, is carrying chains, has mud and snow, all-weather radial or traction tires on all its wheels, is being operated to provide power to both the front and rear wheels, and is being operated in a safe manner.

Conditional road closure

In very bad winter road conditions, all vehicles may be required to use chains regardless of the type of vehicle or type of tires being used. This is known as a “conditional road closure.” A conditional road closure may occur on any of Oregon’s highways and happens frequently during the winter on Interstate 5 through Siskiyou Pass connecting Oregon and California.

Drivers who disobey the signs requiring chains or traction tires are subject to a class C traffic infraction. Additional information about Oregon’s chain and traction tire laws is available at TripCheck.com.



Maintenance minimizes impacts on natural resources

For more information:

Rick Poecker
Office of Maintenance and
Operations Clean Water Program
(503) 986-4484
richard.a.poecker@odot.state.or.us

ODOT's winter highway maintenance practices reduce costs and limit impacts on natural resources while maintaining high standards for public safety – our number one priority. During snow removal, ODOT's natural resource-friendly maintenance practices include:

- Reducing plowing speeds in sensitive areas.
- Minimizing snow blowing into sensitive areas.

Sanding material is sometimes applied on roads and bridges to provide better traction for safer driving. ODOT's practices minimize effects on natural resources by:

- Reducing application rates and frequency of sanding when weather and traffic conditions allow.
- Minimizing sanding in areas with air-quality problems or near waterways and other sensitive areas.
- Placing barriers to capture sanding material along sensitive waterways.

The use of deicers is a valuable and effective way to provide a reasonably safe roadway surface for the traveling public during winter conditions. Winter maintenance chemicals can be used as an *anti-icer* before the storm to help prevent ice from bonding to the road, and as a *deicer* after the storm to help break the bond between ice and road. The use of these products helps reduce the use of sand – and that limits impacts on air quality, water quality and aquatic habitat. ODOT uses:

- The lowest application rate necessary to achieve desired road conditions.
- Environmentally safe products that meet the strict specifications of the Pacific Northwest Snowfighters, a consortium of western states and provinces.

We believe protecting the environment while providing a safe transportation system is a smart move for ODOT and for Oregonians. Plowing, sanding and using chemicals do not, however, make the road completely safe. It is up to you to drive at speeds appropriate for the road and weather conditions. Learn more at www.oregon.gov/ODOT.

ODOT's winter maintenance practices may not reflect the practices used on county or city roadways. Contact your city or county for that information.

Know Before You Go: Visit www.TripCheck.com, Oregon's travel information website, for up-to-the-minute road conditions and more information on Oregon's chain law and chain requirements. You can also get the latest in road conditions by calling 511.

ODOT



Reporting road hazards

To report road hazards (trees down, electric wires across the road, road blocked by mud or rocks, etc.) motorists should call the nearest ODOT dispatch center.

- Portland metro area, Hood River area: (503) 283-5859
- Mid-Willamette Valley, North coast: (503) 362-0457
- Southern Willamette Valley, South coast: (541) 858-3103
- Central and Eastern Oregon: (541) 383-0121

Road and weather condition phone numbers

Oregon

- 511 inside Oregon
- 1-800-977-ODOT (1-800-977-6368) inside Oregon
- 1-503-588-2941 outside Oregon

Washington State

- 511 inside Washington
- 1-800-695-ROAD (1-800-695-7623) outside Washington

California

- 1-800-427-ROAD (1-800-427-7623)

Idaho

- 511 inside Idaho
- 1-888-IDA-ROAD (1-888-432-7623)

Nevada

- 511 inside Nevada
- 1-877- NVROADS (1-877-687-6237)

