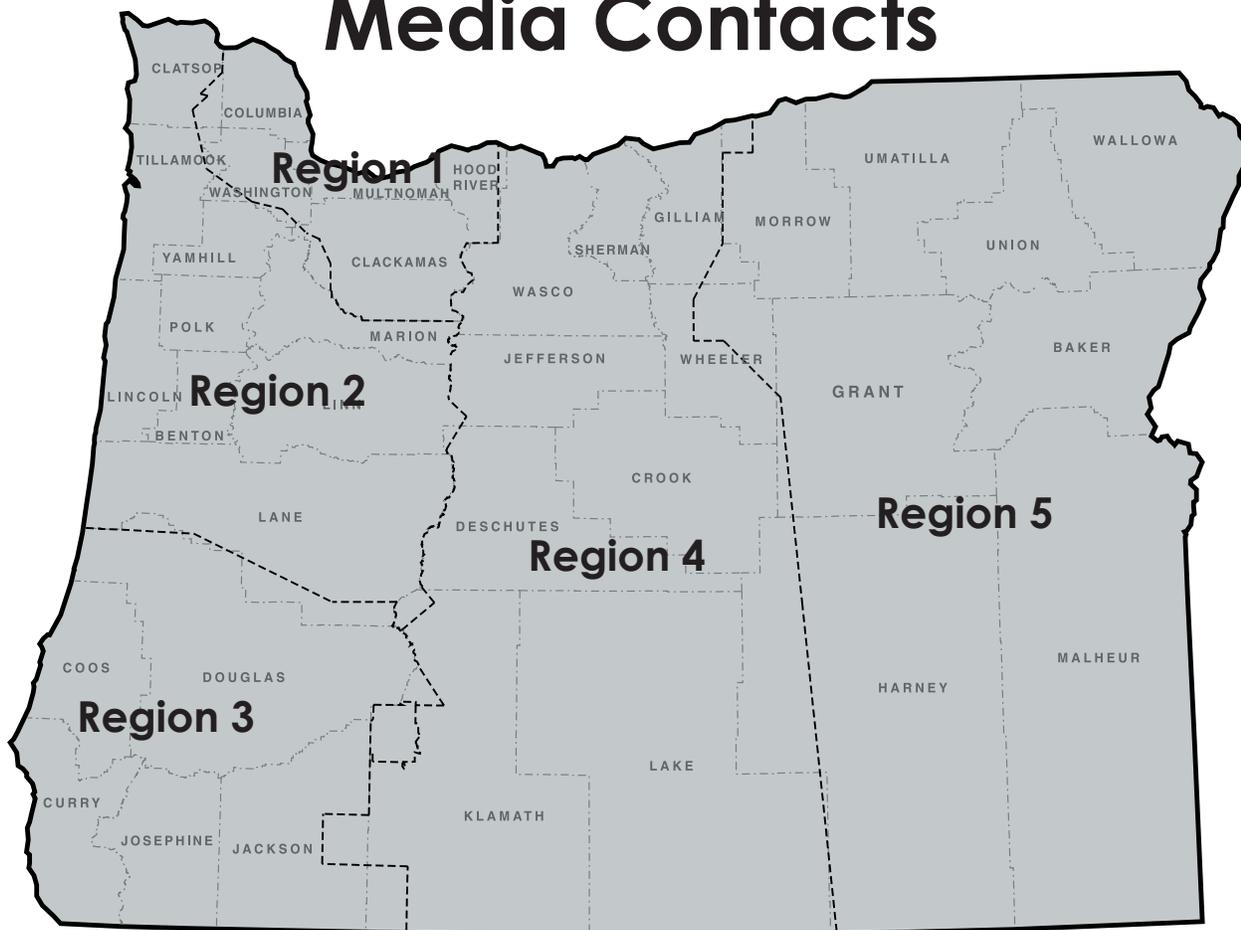


Winter Travel News Packet



2007-2008

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Winter Travel News Packet

CONTENTS

Before you drive

- Winter travel information
- Traction tire options
- Practice chaining up
- Prepare for stormy driving conditions
- Don't plow driveway snow onto state highways
- Sno-Park permits

On the road

- Winter driving tips
- Driving in the rain
- Driving in the fog
- Ice on bridges and overpasses
- Watch for black ice
- Keep a safe distance from plows and sanders
- Use headlights in winter
- Driving in low-visibility conditions
- Power failures can affect driving
- Bicycle commuting in winter

How ODOT helps

- Snow zone signs
- Maintenance effects on natural resources

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Oregon Department of Transportation

BACKGROUND

Before you drive

Winter traveler information

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 web site.

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 200 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 custom camera pages with up to 10 different cameras 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 1.5 million visitors per month, TripCheck.com continues providing valuable road and weather information to enhance safety around the state.

By Phone

TripCheck is now available in a special format for mobile devices such as cell phones and personal digital assistants (PDAs). 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.

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 also offers the feature of forwarding users to the Washington State 511 system for road conditions in that state.

ODOT encourages motorists to pull off the road and park in a safe area before using cell phones.

On Cable TV

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

Comcast subscribers in the Portland metro area can view full-motion video from 18 freeway cameras Monday through Friday, 5 a.m. to 9 a.m. on Comcast Cable Channel 14. The latest images from Portland-area cameras rotate on one side of the screen while a color-coded map displays current speeds on the other.

Bend Broadband customers can view road and weather information from selected cameras as well as live video feeds on Channel 48. Morning commuters in Corvallis get TripCheck information via their local cable systems.

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Oregon Department of Transportation

BACKGROUND

Before you drive

Traction tire options

Oregon state law allows motorists to use studded tires between Nov. 1 and April 1. Because of the damage caused by studded tires to roads, ODOT encourages drivers to consider using chains or non-studded traction tires.

Traction tires without studs meet Rubber Manufacturers Association standards for use in severe snow conditions and carry a special symbol on the tire sidewall showing a three-peaked mountain and snowflake. Research shows these tires provide better traction than studded tires when used on bare pavement.



Studded tire facts

- Studded tires can be used in Oregon between Nov. 1 and April 1. They are defined under Oregon law as a type of traction tire. Driving with studded tires on your vehicle prior to Nov. 1 or after April 1 is a Class C violation and carries a \$145 fine.
- Research shows that studded tires are more effective than all-weather tires on icy roads, but can be less effective in most other conditions.
- Oregon spends about \$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 install.
- 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.

Visit TripCheck.com, Oregon's travel information web site, for more information on Oregon's chain and traction tire law and minimum chain requirements.

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Oregon Department of Transportation

BACKGROUND

Before you drive

Good advice: Practice chaining up

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 install your chains before bad weather strikes.

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

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 put them on. 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. Do not 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 install or remove chains.
- Take along 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 a tire chain fails or comes loose.
- Do not 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.

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Oregon Department of Transportation

BACKGROUND

Before you drive

Prepare for stormy driving conditions

Whenever there's a chance of stormy conditions, Oregon Department of Transportation officials encourage motorists to prepare their vehicles for winter driving conditions 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!

Make sure your vehicle is stocked with the following:

- Rechargeable flashlight
- Cell phone and car adaptor
- 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
- Pocket knife
- 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 and/or arrival changes.

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Oregon Department of Transportation

BACKGROUND

Before you drive

Don't plow driveway snow onto state highways

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.

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Oregon Department of Transportation

BACKGROUND

Before you drive

The scoop on Sno-Park permits

*For more information: Karen Morrison,
Maintenance Services Coordinator, (503) 986-3006*

The Sno-Park program, established in 1977, helps pay for snow removal in designated winter recreation parking locations, called Sno-Parks. Revenue for the program comes from the sale of Sno-Park permits.

There are three types of Sno-Park permits:

- An annual permit is \$20.
- A three-day permit (valid for three consecutive days) is \$7.
- A one-day permit is \$3.

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 to sell the permits may charge an additional service fee for each permit they sell.

Annual permits are also available by mail from DMV headquarters in Salem. To order an annual Sno-Park permit, send a written request with your return address, phone number and a check or money order to DMV, Vehicle Mail No. 1, 1905 Lana Avenue NE, Salem, Oregon, 97314.

A survey of Sno-Park users shows that people who buy annual permits use them more than 13 times each winter. Frequent Sno-Park users save \$19 per year by buying an annual permit.

There are about 100 parking areas designated as Sno-Parks throughout Oregon. Sno-Parks are located in all mountain passes and at most recognized ski, snowmobile and snow-play areas. A list of Sno-Parks is included in the program brochure available at DMV offices, wherever permits are sold and on TripCheck.com under "Travel Center."

Sno-Park permits issued in Washington, California and Idaho are honored in Oregon. Oregon permits are honored in those states. If your vehicle has Washington license plates, however, you must have a Washington permit to park in a winter recreation area in Washington.

The maximum fee that can be charged for a Sno-Park permit is 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 also recommends Sno-Park locations. The seven-member group represents snowmobile riders, cross-country skiers, ski area operators and the public.

For information about becoming a Sno-Park permit sales agent, contact DMV Vehicle Mail at (503) 945-5120.

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Oregon Department of Transportation

BACKGROUND

On the road

Winter driving tips

Winter driving in Oregon can be unnerving — and dangerous. But there are several important steps motorists can take to increase safety on the road. The first tip: start by checking out road and weather conditions on TripCheck.com, ODOT's up-to-date traffic, incident and road condition Web site.

Before your trip

- Give yourself extra time to get to your destination. Tell someone what your planned route is, and then if that route changes, share that information as well.
- Slow down in winter weather — posted speed limits are set for ideal, dry conditions.
- Remove snow from lights, hood, heater and air inlet vents (usually at the base of the windshield). Clean your headlights.
- Ensure your tires are in good condition and properly inflated for best traction. Carry chains or use traction tires during winter.

On the road

- Children weighing forty pounds or less must ride in child safety seats; infants must ride rear-facing until they are 1 year old AND weigh more than 20 pounds; children over forty pounds must ride in a booster seat until they are 8 years old or 4'9" tall.
- Don't use your cruise control in wet, icy or snowy conditions.
- Drive with low-beam headlights in snow or fog.
- Position your hands on the steering wheel at 9 o'clock and 3 o'clock, or lower.
- 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.
- Avoid driving through snowdrifts.
- Slow down in advance of shaded areas (especially curves) where ice and snow take longer to melt.
- Don't pass sanders or snowplows — they will pull over soon! Give them plenty of room.

In case of trouble

- If you lose traction and your vehicle feels like it's floating, gradually slow down— don't slam on the brakes!
- Your owner's manual will usually recommend the braking technique most effective for your car. Information from the National Safety Council indicates that drivers with front- and rear-wheel-drive vehicles with disc or drum brakes should press on the brake pedal with a slow,

steady pressure until just before they lock. When you feel them start to lock, ease off until your wheels are rolling, then squeeze again.

- Steering, braking and accelerating smoothly are key to maximum vehicle control on slippery surfaces. Steer lightly — just enough to follow the path you intend.

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Oregon Department of Transportation

BACKGROUND

On the road

Take your time driving in the rain

Rain creates a variety of dangerous conditions: visibility is reduced, traction between tires and the road is reduced, and your car handles with less predictability than in dry-road conditions. Take precautionary measures, including giving 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. Driving fast through puddles could 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.
- 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 deficiencies include weak batteries, worn or damaged wiper blades, worn tires or tires that are not inflated properly, clogged air filters, low washer fluid, dirty or low motor oil and low anti-freeze levels. In low-visibility conditions, the windshield wipers and defroster help keep your view clear. Check them both to make sure they are working properly and replace the wipers if brittle or damaged.

- 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 surf 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.

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Oregon Department of Transportation

BACKGROUND

On the road

Driving in the fog

A common winter driving hazard is thick fog. Drivers 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 disperse in thick fog, making visibility worse for you and other drivers.
- Turn on your rear fog lamps, if your vehicle is equipped. They greatly aid visibility for drivers approaching from the rear.
- 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; the air conditioning setting will help keep moisture from building up inside.
- 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.

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Oregon Department of Transportation

BACKGROUND

On the road

Watch for ice on bridges and overpasses

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.

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Oregon Department of Transportation

BACKGROUND

On the road

Watch for black ice

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 vehicles won't help much. Ordinary snow tires are designed for snow, not ice. Studded tires can be helpful; chains are even more helpful. 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 lowest and traffic lightest. 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:

- 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.

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Oregon Department of Transportation

BACKGROUND

On the road

Keep a safe distance from plows and sanders

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.

On state highways, passing a snowplow on the right is illegal. 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.

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Oregon Department of Transportation

BACKGROUND

On the road

Be seen: Use headlights in winter!

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 where there is little contrast between the color of a vehicle and that of 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.

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Oregon Department of Transportation

BACKGROUND

On the road

Driving in low visibility conditions

Nighttime driving is more difficult because visibility is reduced. 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 beams will disperse in thick fog or snow, making visibility worse for you and other drivers.
- Turn on your rear fog lamps, if your vehicle is equipped. They greatly aid visibility for drivers approaching from the rear.
- 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.

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Oregon Department of Transportation

BACKGROUND

On the road

Power failures can affect highway systems

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:

1. Treat the intersection as an all-way stop: Come to a full stop. Look both ways for other traffic and no pedestrians; when it is safe, drive cautiously through the intersection.
2. If there is other traffic, common courtesy requires that the driver who stops first goes first.
3. 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.

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.

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.

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Oregon Department of Transportation

BACKGROUND

On the road

Bicycle commuting in winter

*For more information: Jeff Monson,
Commute Options executive director, (541) 330-2647*

During the summer, bicycle commuting is a breeze — with warm days and long hours of sunshine. Just because the sun goes south for the winter doesn't mean a sentence of solitary confinement for the Schwinn. With a few precautions, bicycling in the winter offers the same benefits as fair-weather cycling, such as being good for your health and great for the environment! Here are some tips to make your winter bicycle commuting 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; or
- 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; and
- A reflective vest and reflective tape on your helmet and elsewhere.

This information is provided by Commute Options for Central Oregon located in Bend. Commute Options promotes alternative transportation, including walking, bicycling, carpooling, telecommuting and transit.

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Oregon Department of Transportation

BACKGROUND

How ODOT helps

Watch for snow zone signs

*For more information: Karen Morrison,
Maintenance Services coordinator, (503) 986-3006*

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 to motorists during the winter months.

Snow zone signs let motorists know about the current requirements for using chains and traction tires. Three messages may be displayed on these signs 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 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. 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 or other tires that meet tire industry standards for use in severe snow conditions. These tires display a symbol of a three-peaked mountain and a snowflake on the sidewall.



When towing, 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, and is being operated to provide power to both the front and rear wheels.

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.

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Oregon Department of Transportation

BACKGROUND

How ODOT helps

Maintenance minimizes impacts on natural resources

*For more information: Rick Poecker,
Office of Maintenance, Clean Water Program, (503) 986-4484*

ODOT's winter highway maintenance practices reduce costs and avoid affecting 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; and
- 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; and
- placing barriers to capture sanding material along sensitive waterways.

The use of deicing chemicals is a valuable and effective way to provide a reasonably safe roadway surface for the traveling public during winter conditions. The use of these chemicals helps to reduce the use of sand, limiting effects 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.

Protecting the environment while providing a safe transportation system is a smart move for ODOT and for Oregonians.

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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) inside California
- 1-916-445-ROAD (1-916-445-7623) outside California

Idaho

- 1-888-IDA-ROAD (1-888-432-7623)

Nevada

- 1-877- NVROADS (1-877-687-6237)

