



Oregon Department of Transportation

NEWS RELEASE

Region 4 *Wasco, Sherman, Gilliam, Jefferson, Wheeler, Deschutes, Crook, Klamath and Lake Counties*

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Watch for Snow Zone signs

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 (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.

“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, passenger 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 passenger car or light truck is rated less than 10,000 GVW and is not towing or being towed.

Four-wheel and all-wheel-drive vehicles are exempt from the requirement to use chains in most winter conditions. This exemption applies only 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.

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