



Oregon Department of Transportation

# NEWS RELEASE

**Region 1** *Columbia, Washington, Multnomah, Clackamas and Hood River Counties*

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Feb. 3, 2006

06-013 R1

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Regional Projects Website: [www.oregon.gov/ODOT/HWY/REGION1](http://www.oregon.gov/ODOT/HWY/REGION1)

## HIGH WIND WATCH IN PLACE THIS WEEKEND

The Oregon Department of Transportation (ODOT) and the Oregon State Police (OSP) advise motorists to expect varied roadway conditions when traveling throughout the metro-area and over mountain passes this weekend. **The National Weather Service has issued a high wind watch from Friday night, Feb. 3, through Saturday afternoon, Feb. 4**, for the foothills of the Cascades, north and central Willamette Valley and Clark County, the lower Columbia River and the Interstate 5 corridor of southwest Washington. A high wind watch means there is the potential for a hazardous high wind event. **Wind gusts up to 65 miles per hour are possible on Saturday.**

Motorists are urged to use caution and reduce speeds while driving during high wind events. Watch for flying debris as well as downed trees and material on the roads. All high-profile vehicles such as trucks, vans and recreational vehicles must be very cautious in these conditions.

### **Snow in the mountains**

In addition, as much as 12 inches of snow is predicted to fall through Saturday night at Government Camp on U.S. 26. During winter weather conditions, state law requires motorists to have chains or traction tires in or on their vehicle when traveling over Oregon mountain passes. Drivers bound for mountain resorts or passes this weekend are reminded to park only in designated areas. **All illegally parked vehicles in snow zones will be towed at the owner's expense.** Illegally parked vehicles prohibit snow removal equipment from properly clearing roads and make travel hazardous for other drivers.

In very bad winter road conditions all vehicles may be required to use chains regardless of the type of vehicle or type of tire being used. In addition to carrying chains or traction tires, drivers need to be prepared for low visibility due to heavy snowfall. Vehicles need to be winter-ready with an emergency kit that includes food and water and have a full tank of gas before heading over mountain passes.

### **Winter Driving Tips**

If you must drive in low-visibility conditions, here are some tips to remember:

- Slow down. Do not drive faster than your vision permits
- Increase following distance to ensure enough reaction time and stopping distance
- Turn on all your lights, including hazard lights, to give other vehicles the opportunity to better notice your vehicle. Use low-beam headlights and fog lights. Do not use high beams
- Use windshield wipers and the defroster, as needed, to maximize your ability to see
- Be ready for emergency stops by other vehicles
- Turn off your cruise control so that you are in control of your vehicle
- Use the right edge of the road or roadside reflectors as a guide
- Listen for traffic you can't see
- Do not change lanes or pass other vehicles, unless absolutely necessary
- Signal early and brake gently
- Watch for slow-moving or parked vehicles or snow plows
- If you cannot see, pull completely off the road, preferably at a rest area, truck stop or parking lot

**For current road conditions, including road cameras and weather information, visit [www.TripCheck.com](http://www.TripCheck.com) or call 511. TripCheck also contains information on chain and traction tire requirements and other travel information.**

For more tips about driving in all types of weather conditions, visit <http://www.oregon.gov/ODOT/COMM/winter.shtml>

**##ODOT##**