



ODOT'S
winter
READY

WINTER TRAVEL NEWS PACKET

WINTER 2019 - 2020



**Oregon
Department
of Transportation**



[ODOT Home Page](#)



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What's inside

Before you go

- 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
- Use common sense when using GPS navigation

On the road

- Drivers: be prepared, drive healthy
- Take your time driving in the rain
- Use caution driving in snowy conditions
- Icy conditions: what you should know
- Use headlights in winter! Be seen!
- Low-visibility conditions require extra measures
- Power failures can affect highway systems
- Remember your travel options
- 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: levels of service
- A look inside ODOT's winter storm toolbox

Graphics

- TripCheck infographic
- Tire chains infographic
- Vehicle checklist infographic
- Driving in the rain infographic
- Winter biking infographic
- Snowplow safety infographic

Reporting road hazards

Road and weather condition numbers

Winter driving information in the ODOT News Room:

www.oregon.gov/odot/pages/winter-driving.aspx

On Twitter* (@oregondot): twitter.com/OregonDOT

On Facebook*: facebook.com/OregonDOT

Flash Alert updates:

www.flashalert.net – register for ODOT and DAS

Crash statistics for Oregon:

www.oregon.gov/ODOT/Data/Pages/Crash.aspx

ODOT winter maintenance photos and videos:

www.flickr.com/oregondot/

Winter Resource Album: <https://flic.kr/s/aHsjsncL1P>

www.youtube.com/OregonDOT

Winter Video Playlist: <https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PL6mL7JnVXhpgcXL8fUBktaCqyRACpEPqB>

Winter driving tips brochure:

www.oregon.gov/ODOT/Documents/winter-driving-guide.pdf

**Social media accounts are generally staffed weekdays from 8 a.m. - 5 p.m. except in extreme conditions. For 24/7 coverage, please refer to www.TripCheck.com.*



DriveHealthy!

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



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 by phone at 888-ASK ODOT (888-275-6368) or by email at Ask.ODOT@odot.state.or.us.

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Know before you go — winter travel information

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Winter in Oregon means that we could have a variety of road conditions all across the state. To help you be better prepared as a traveler, the Oregon Department of Transportation offers several ways for you to get the latest in traveler information.



Online

For the latest travel conditions, visit www.TripCheck.com, ODOT's mobile-friendly travel information website. The site features:

- Maps updated in real time that display road conditions, color-coded traffic speeds on most roads across the state, trouble spots, weather, construction, maintenance and traffic incidents. You'll also find high impact incidents prominently displayed as "alerts."
- More than 400 camera images from key locations throughout Oregon as well as southern Washington and northern California.
- The ability to create and bookmark custom camera pages with up to 10 different cameras for quick checks of specific routes.
- Links to bus, airport, train, bicycle and trucking information and detailed information on scenic byways, safety rest areas and Sno-Parks.
- Detailed information on the use of traction tires and chains in Oregon.
- Waze user reports and traffic jams; these are overlaid on the TripCheck map, providing real-time traffic and road conditions from Wazers in the area.
- "Travel Time," showing current travel times from key highway connections throughout the Portland metro area.
- Updated highway closure information; it's now easier to view highway closure information associated with winter weather conditions on I-84 and I-5.

TripCheck information is also available via Twitter. Visit www.TripCheck.com and click on the Twitter page to learn more. TripCheck TV allows users to create a custom display of road condition information and camera images.

By phone

Call 511. Travelers in Oregon can dial 511 to access the same immediate road and weather information available on TripCheck. (Note: 511 does not have access to Waze data.)

- You 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. Mobile 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 can forward users to the Washington state 511 system for road conditions in that state.

Remember, in Oregon, drivers are allowed to use hands-free devices but not texting devices or handheld devices. ODOT encourages motorists to pull off the road and park in a safe area before using mobile devices.

Report a road hazard

To report road hazards (trees down, electric wires across the road, road blocked by mud or rocks, etc.) 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

Wazers: we encourage you to submit road hazards, incidents or other related conditions that you experience in order to help others stay safe and mobile.

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.

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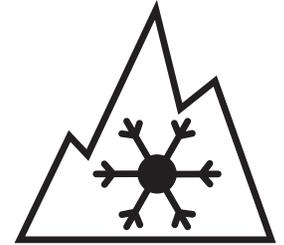


Traction tires: you have options

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When you consider your traction tire needs for winter travel, you have several alternatives.

Because studded tires damage pavement, 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 presumptive fine of nearly \$200.
- 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.
- Studies conducted by ODOT and others show that studded snow tires damage Oregon roads. Our most recent study concluded that studded tires cost Oregon more than \$8.5 million per year because roadways required repaving earlier than they normally would be.
- 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 and use.
- Check your owner's manual: link chains may not be recommended for use on some types of vehicles.

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.

Snow socks

- Snow socks are a textile covering that slips over your tires. Snow socks are a viable option if you need temporary traction to get out of a snowy spot.

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

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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. But don't wait to use them! 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. 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.



ODOT's YouTube channel, www.youtube.com/user/OregonDOT, can help! Learn how to install chains by watching www.youtube.com/watch?v=_8RVbDuyOcY.

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

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Whenever there's a chance of stormy weather, if you and your vehicle are prepared in advance – and drive with extra caution – the greater your chances of a safe trip.



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.
- Know your route. Some roads, like state highways, are regularly maintained. Other roads, such as forest service roads, are maintained less frequently.
- Be prepared to encounter more traffic if you are traveling the day before, the day of or the day after a holiday.
- Don't drive fatigued. If you're feeling tired, find a place where you can safely pull off the road and rest.

Make sure your vehicle is stocked with the following:

- Working flashlight (rechargeable or with extra batteries)
- 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 (including prescription medications)
- 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. Young children may also need more frequent rest stops.

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:

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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

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Oregonians enjoy winter recreation. There are about 100 Sno-Parks (designated winter recreation parking areas) throughout the state located in all mountain passes and at most recognized ski, snowmobile and snow-play areas. From Nov. 1 – April 30 in Oregon, parking in a Sno-Park requires a valid permit displayed in the lower left corner of your vehicle's windshield.

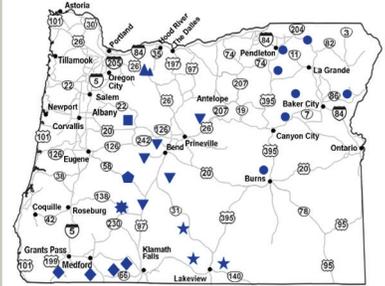
Map Legend

- ▲ Mt Hood
- Northeast Oregon
- Santiam Pass
- ▼ Central Oregon
- ◆ Willamette Pass
- ★ Southeast Oregon
- ☆ Crater Lake / Diamond Lake
- ◆ Lake of the Woods / Siskiyou Summit

Other Information

- Sno-Park Permits
- Sno-Park Permit Vendors

Oregon Sno-Parks



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.

Permits are also available to purchase online at www.oregondmv.com/dmv2u. If you buy an annual permit online, a printable interim permit will be emailed to you immediately. The interim permit may be used for up to 14 days until you receive the annual permit in the mail.

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.

For information about becoming a Sno-Park permit sales agent, contact DMV Vehicle Mail at 503-945-7949. For a list of Sno-Park permit vendors, visit DMV's website: www.oregon.gov/ODOT/DMV/docs/sno_park_vendor_list.pdf.

Sno-Park permits issued in California and Idaho are honored in Oregon, and Oregon permits are honored in those states. Parking in an Oregon Sno-Park without a permit may result in a \$30 fine.

A list of Oregon's Sno-Parks is available at TripCheck.com under "Travel Center."

ODOT



Use common sense when using GPS navigation

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When roads are closed and your GPS navigation system directs you onto a detour route, keep in mind that the device you count on for guidance could instead guide you into trouble. Most navigation tools don't take current road or weather conditions into consideration. They may direct you onto remote roads that are neither maintained nor passible in all weather conditions.

Navigation systems and similar smartphone apps are great tools, but travelers may need to verify the identified detour route is appropriate given current conditions and the vehicle they are driving. Here are a few tips to consider:

What you can do

- Be aware that the app on your phone or in your GPS device might not have the latest information – don't follow it blindly!
- Use TripCheck.com (available on your computer and on your phone) to get the latest on state road conditions, or call 511.
- Remember, in winter conditions (or in summer's fire season), roads can be impassable, so **USE COMMON SENSE**.
- If you are not familiar with an area and current road conditions, stay on state roads and don't attempt detours onto roads you don't know.
- Alter your travel plans. If you are not sure of the route and road conditions your GPS device directs you to, ask local folks for information and consult a map. It is better to stay the night in town rather than be stuck on a remote road in the middle of nowhere.

What we will do

- ODOT crews work continually to keep state highways safe, but during certain conditions, such as blowing snow and freezing temperatures, you may want to avoid travel altogether.
- ODOT will issue media flash alerts if roads are closed. These will be updated continually on TripCheck.com.

ODOT #



Drivers: be prepared, drive healthy

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Driving in winter isn't the same as driving at other times of the year. Conditions can change dramatically in just a short period of time or within just a few miles – or even just around the corner. Here are some important things that you can do as a driver to be better prepared.

- **Focus on driving.** Conditions can change quickly, so it's important to focus on the road ahead. Put away distractions like cell phones, tablets and other electronic devices. Keep your hands on the wheel and your mind on the road.
- **Drive sober.** There are many reasons to celebrate over the holiday season and beyond, but if you're driving, it's critical that you be sober and clear-headed. You can become impaired by things other than alcohol, too: marijuana or prescription drugs – even over-the-counter medicines – can affect your driving behavior. Throw in winter weather, and the results could be tragic.
- **Be rested.** It's tempting to drive straight through to grandmother's house, but it's better to get there late than not at all. If you're feeling tired, take a break – before it's too late.
- **Prepare ahead of time.** Check road conditions before you head out by visiting TripCheck.com or calling 511. Make sure your travel kit is stowed in the trunk, and tell someone where you are going and what route you are taking. Storms can occur without warning, so be prepared.
- **Watch out for each other, on and near the road.** You may have great driving habits, and you may be prepared... but that doesn't mean it's true for everyone else. Be diligent and drive defensively in bad weather; watch for pedestrians and bicyclists who may be obscured by heavy rain or snow.

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



Take your time driving in the rain

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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 a recommended 2/32 of an inch tread depth at any two adjacent grooves. 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 more than 4,300 crashes across the state over the past five years. November is close behind, averaging 4,000 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!



Use caution in snowy conditions

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In some parts of Oregon, driving in the snow is as common as night following day. In other parts of the state, however, driving in the snow is a rarity. No matter where you live in Oregon, driving in the snow requires skills and knowledge that can save lives.

Snowplows and you

For example, did you know it is illegal to pass a snowplow on the right on state highways? Just be patient – the snowplow drivers will get off the road soon, and in the meantime, they are making the road safer. Keep in mind: many snowplows have wing plows that stick out more than eight feet from the right front edge of the truck. Think twice before passing on the left: the road ahead hasn't been plowed as recently as the one you're on. Ruts in the snow can grab tires, and icy conditions make it difficult to control any vehicle at higher speeds.

Here are a few other things to know and do in preparation for driving over a pass or around the state where snowy winter conditions prevail:

- Allow extra time to get where you're going – travel is going to be slower than at other times of the year.
- Bicyclists should be extra careful about motorized vehicles, which take longer to stop in the snow, while motorized vehicles must be extra watchful for bicyclists, who can't maneuver as easily when conditions are slick.
- Check road conditions on your route before you go at TripCheck.com or 511. Plan your trip accordingly. If conditions are questionable, wait it out.
- Turn off your cruise control.
- Allow extra stopping distance. There is less traction on slick, snowy roads.
- Turn on your headlights to increase your visibility (low beams).
- Brake gently to avoid skidding or sliding. If the wheels lock up, ease off the brakes.
- Carry chains and know how to use them.
- Make sure your vehicle is in top operating conditions, with clean headlights, good brakes, working windshield wipers and good tires.
- Slow down when approaching off-ramps, bridges and shady spots where the snow often lingers longer.
- Be prepared for delays by having your emergency kit filled and up-to-date. Also, let someone know where you're going and when you plan to be there.
- If you are getting tired, get a room and finish your trip when you're refreshed – you could save a life.

ODOT



Icy conditions: what you should know

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Bridges and overpasses are the most dangerous parts of the road in the winter, but ice can show up anywhere, unannounced – in a shady corner or under a canopy of leafless trees. Ideally, you'd never drive on ice: Ice on the road prevents tires from gripping, so steering is difficult, stopping is harder and driving is unpredictable.



And when conditions are icy, even having a four-wheel drive vehicle won't help much – unless you have chains on the tires. Chains or other gripping devices are the best way to travel on ice, if you have to travel. But even with chains, stopping distance is still several times greater than on dry pavement with ordinary tires.

Black ice can fool you

It gets even more challenging when black ice appears. Also called glare ice or clear ice, black ice is a thin layer of ice on the roadway and it is particularly hazardous 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.

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 and parts of the road where traffic isn't traveling. 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.

If you have to go out during times when roads and bridges are icy, remember these tips:

- Turn off your cruise control, be alert and drive cautiously to avoid ice on the road ahead.
- Slow down and keep your distance from vehicles in front of you. Continue to adjust your speed for the conditions.
- Allow about three times as much space between vehicles.
- 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.
- Do not drive through snow drifts: they may cause your vehicle to lose traction.
- When signs say "Chains required," you must put chains or other approved devices on your vehicle.



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 conditions require extra measures

For more information:
Jeff Greiner
ODOT Transportation Safety
503-986-4198
jeff.p.greiner@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. Often in the Pacific Northwest, visibility is reduced to less than one-quarter mile and a Dense Fog Advisory is issued. During these times and in other low visibility conditions, follow these safety tips:



- Slow down and don't use cruise control.
- Keep your headlights clean and your windshield clear.
- Increase following distance.
- Eliminate distractions so you can focus on the road.
- In fog or during snowfall, use your low beams. High beam lights could reflect back, making visibility worse for you and other drivers.
- In fog, use your foglights – but remember, Oregon law says you must turn them off when within 500 feet of an oncoming vehicle and within 350 feet when following another vehicle.
- 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.
- In dense fog or blinding snow conditions, 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 and don't change lanes or attempt to pass.
- Never stop in the travel lanes.

“Too fast” is too risky!

One of the most common driver errors contributing to crashes is “driving too fast for conditions.” Weather conditions do impact travel safely, so slow down and be ready to make other adjustments as road conditions change.

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 either 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 can also 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



Remember your travel options

For more information:

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

Winter can be the perfect season to try out a carpool or vanpool, ride the bus, or take the train

Oregonians have options when it comes to travel. We have bus service in all the major metropolitan areas (and in between), and even some of our smaller communities have bus service. Throughout the state – eastern, central, the coast – regional bus services offer connections. If you want to avoid driving on ice and snow or slogging through the rain this winter, try taking public transit. Here are some options:

- Plan your trip easily using a variety of resources – here's one that can help: www.oregon.gov/ODOT/RPTD/Pages/Plan-a-Trip.aspx.
- Urban, regional and intercity bus services, plus taxis and more: get contact information at www.oregon.gov/ODOT/RPTD/Pages/Oregon-Transit-Providers.aspx.
- Amtrak Cascades train and Cascades POINT bus (Eugene to Portland to Seattle to Vancouver, B.C.): www.amtrakcascades.com/
- POINT intercity bus service, makes connections all over the state: www.oregon-point.com.



We even have a statewide ride-matching service, Get There Oregon, <https://getthereoregon.org>, aimed at helping commuters connect. You can even search for special events in your area and look into sharing the ride! Several transit districts have programs aimed specifically at helping you find your way from point A to point B. There are several dozen vanpools operating up and down the Willamette and Rogue valleys, and you might find a carpool that works perfectly for you.

So don't despair! If the weather makes you leery of venturing out, think about an alternative way to get where you want to go – you just might enjoy it!

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

ODOT



Safe bicycle commuting in winter conditions

For more information:

Jeff Monson
Executive Director
Commute Options
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* located in Bend. *Commute Options* promotes active 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

Winter weather conditions can make driving dangerous for anyone, but when you are driving a 70-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 No. 1 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 (<https://youtu.be/-8b4Z715wOo>) 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 are available on ODOT's website, www.oregon.gov/odot/pages/winter-driving.aspx.

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/chain-laws.asp

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 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 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 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 to comply with the chain rules.



“Chains Required: Traction Tires Allowed on Vehicles Under 10,000 GVW”

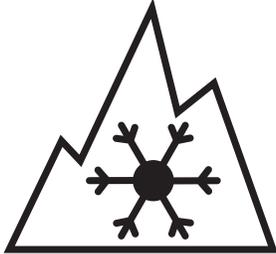
Vehicles towing or rated over 10,000 pounds GVW must use chains. Chains

must also be used on a trailer or vehicle being towed if it has a brake that operates while in tow to comply with chain rules. 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 vehicle 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: levels of service

For more information:

Katherine Benenati
Public Affairs Program Manager
503-986-4180
katherine.a.benenati@
odot.state.or.us

When the weather is at its worst, ODOT's statewide Winter Level of Service Plan goes into effect. It establishes anti-icing/de-icing, sanding, and plowing priorities for state highways. Priorities are based on safety, the relative amounts of traffic that the highways typically carry and the anticipated impact to commerce and industry.

There are five Statewide Levels of Service. Highways tagged for high-volume priority service are plowed first; medium- and low- volume highways are handled as soon as possible thereafter.

When winter weather hits, we'll work around the clock. But remember: our goal is to keep roads passable, not completely free of ice and snow. During a one day storm, ODOT may use approximately 600 trucks full of sand and 150 trucks of de-icer.

Clean up operations begin as bad weather clears. It normally takes 4-8 weeks to remove all the sanding material that was placed on the road.

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



A look inside ODOT's winter storm toolbox

For more information:

Katherine Benenati
Public Affairs Program Manager
503-986-4180
katherine.a.benenati@
odot.state.or.us

Our goal is to use the right tool at the right time to increase traveler safety while limiting environmental damage.

By themselves, our winter storm tools – sanding, salting, deicing and plowing – do not make the roadway surface completely safe during or immediately after a storm. You, the traveler, play a very important role: You judge whether it's safe to travel.

Your role requires you to be practiced in the skills necessary to travel safely in the conditions you face; to know when it's best to not travel, if conditions are too dangerous; to keep your vehicle in safe operating condition to be able to travel; and to have the tools, equipment, food and water you need in case you must stop and wait for help.



Two tools in ODOT's winter storm toolbox: liquid magnesium chloride (left) and solid salt.

Travel at speeds appropriate for current road and weather conditions. Carry chains when you travel through Oregon's snow zones. And always know before you go: Check travel conditions before you travel using TripCheck.com, 5-1-1 or local news sources.

Solid salt

We don't plan to use salt every time it snows or we encounter an ice storm. Solid salt is just another tool in our toolbox, along with liquid deicer, sand and our equipment (an increasing variety of snowplows). Each has a time and place; each is deployed when we believe it is most effective. Our goal is to maximize safety while minimizing the environmental effects each of the different winter toolbox tools can cause.

We continue to analyze our use of salt. Since each storm is different, we cannot state ahead of time when or where we will use salt. Our best advice is to assume that we used sand, salt or liquid deicer to fight snow and ice before, during and after every winter storm. Always wash your car after a winter storm, including the undercarriage.

Liquid deicer

Liquid magnesium chloride with corrosion inhibitor has proven to be an effective way to provide reasonably safe road surfaces in winter conditions. We generally use it both before and during a storm to prevent ice and snow from bonding to the pavement. Travel is safer. And we can use less sand. As with the other tools in our other toolbox, we use the lowest application rate at the right time and place to achieve the desired road conditions. To protect water quality, we only use deicers that meet strict quality specifications.

Sand

When deicers will not be cost effective (based on a variety of environmental and pavement variables), we use sanding material to provide better traction for safer driving. We use sand only when and where appropriate. We try to avoid applying sand to bare pavement to avoid bounce and scatter. We often pre-wet sanding material with liquid deicer to help it stay where we placed it. We place barriers to capture scattered sand along sensitive waterways. And we pick up sand after placing it – often repeating the drop/pickup cycle several times during a storm. It takes 3-5 times as long to pick it back up than it does to place it.

Snowplows

Plowing is the most efficient way to remove snow and ice from the pavement, and is most effective when salt or liquid deicer has been used to break the bond between pavement and ice or snow. In 2018 ODOT bought five tow plows and five 10- yard trucks, each with frame mounted, side discharge, 10-yard spreaders with extra horsepower needed to pull the tow plows. The new truck and tow plow function as a “force multiplier,” doing the work of two trucks with only one operator. The combo is able to plow two lanes at up to 55 mph.

ODOT

What do you get on

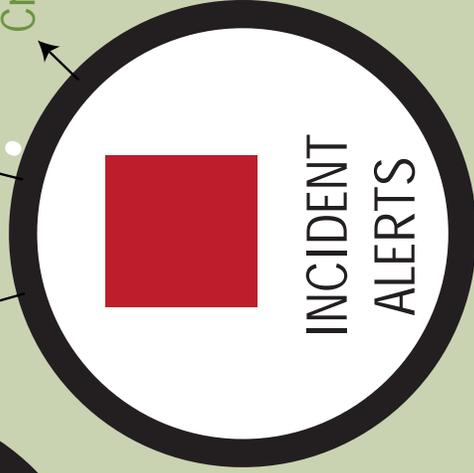


Travel conditions
Real time updates
Twitter alerts



Statewide
traffic
cameras

Weather
Construction
Crashes



Travel options,
Waze reports...
and more!



Statewide
travel times



Know before you go.



PUTTING ON TIRE CHAINS

Get the right size

Consult your owner's manual.

Practice

*Know how to install
your chains before you go.*

Pull over

*Choose a safe and level area
that's away from traffic.*

Double check

*Retighten your chains after
driving a short distance.*

Slow down

*You can still slide with chains —
don't drive faster than 30 mph.*

When installing chains...

Wear protective gear:

- A brightly colored jacket or a reflective vest
- A hat
- Warm gloves

Stay dry!

- Use a tarp or plastic sheet to protect yourself



Want to learn more?

Watch our YouTube video:
www.youtube.com/oregondot



Know before you go.



Winter Travel Checklist

Before you travel, check your car to make sure it's in good working order.

LIGHTS 

BATTERY 

FLUIDS 

BELTS, HOSES 

WIPERS 

HEAT/AC 

BRAKES 

TIRES 



Be prepared

- 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



Know before you go.

6

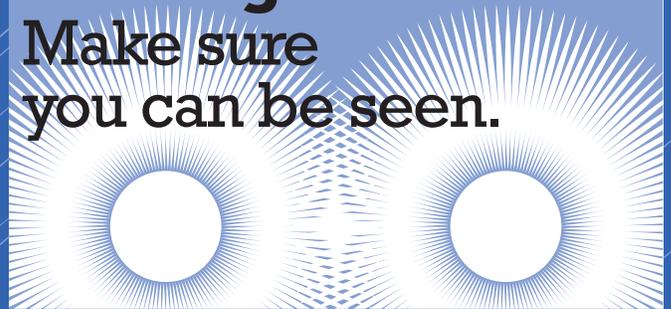
things to remember driving in the rain

Turn on your windshield wipers

Make sure you can see.

Turn on your headlights

Make sure you can be seen.



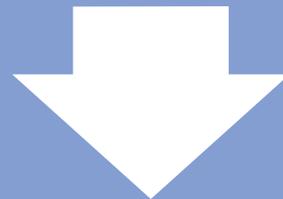
Turn off your cruise control

It gives you better control of your car.



Slow down!

Rain can make road surfaces slick.



Increase your stopping distance

It's harder to stop on a wet road.



Steer clear of standing water

Water can hide potential hazards.



Bicycle Commuting In Winter

Choose the Right Equipment

- Mountain bike
- Sturdy tires
- Fenders
- Bright light in front
- Red light in back
- Reflectors

Choose the Right Clothing

- Layered clothing
- Wind jacket
- Reflective vest
- Wind pants/long underwear
- Gloves/windproof mittens
- Neck gaiter
- Warm hat under helmet
- Helmet cover with ear band



Emergency Kit

- Pump
- Spare tire
- Patch kit
- Extra light
- Basic tools
- Jacket
- Cell phone



Snowplow Safety

Don't assume a snowplow driver can see you!

Never pass a snowplow on the right.

That's where the snow goes!

Increase your following distance.

Beware of flying snow, spray and gravel.

Avoid blind spots.

A plow driver's field of vision is limited.

Drive slowly.

Be smart, be patient.

Know before you go.





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 hazard hotline *OSP

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
- www.TripCheck.com

Washington State

- 511 inside Washington
- 1-800-695-ROAD (1-800-695-7623) outside Washington
- www.wsdot.wa.gov/traffic/trafficalerts

California

- 1-800-427-ROAD (1-800-427-7623)
- quickmap.dot.ca.gov

Idaho

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

Nevada

- 511 inside Nevada
- 1-877- NVROADS (1-877-687-6237)
- www.nvroads.com

Sign up for Flash Alerts

FlashAlert Newswire is an internet-based system for distributing emergency changes and other news. Go to FlashAlert.net and sign up for alerts from the Oregon Department of Transportation on road conditions, highway closures and incidents. You can also get information on state office closures by signing up for notifications from the Department of Administrative Services.

**When winter weather hits, we'll work around the clock.
But remember: our goal is to keep roads passable,
not completely free of ice and snow.**

