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Before you go

- Know before you go — winter traveler information
- Traction tires: you have options
- Practice chaining up before you slip and 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
- Parking poses problems for pedestrians, plows
- Use common sense when using GPS navigation

On the road

- Drivers: be prepared, drive healthy
- Take your time driving in the rain
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- Icy conditions: what you should know
- Wet weather means increased slide danger
- 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
- Hefty fines for trucks failing to use tire chains in Oregon
- 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
- Snowplow safety infographic
- Driving in the rain infographic
- Bicycle commuting in winter infographic

Reporting road hazards

Road and weather condition numbers
Sign up for FlashAlerts

Winter driving information in the ODOT Newsroom:
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/aHjsjnscL1P
www.youtube.com/OregonDOT

Winter Video Playlist: https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PL6mL7JnXhpqcXL8fUBktaCqyRACPpEPqB

Winter driving tips brochure:

*Social media accounts are generally staffed weekdays from 8 a.m. - 5 p.m. except in extreme conditions.
For 24/7/365 coverage, please refer to www.TripCheck.com.
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 Sno-Parks, rest areas 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.oregon.gov.
Winter in Oregon means we can have a variety of road conditions all across the state: rain, snow, sleet, ice, sunshine, fog and more. To help you be better prepared as a traveler, we offer several ways to get the latest in vital traveler information.

**Online**
Visit TripCheck.com. For the latest travel conditions, visit ODOT’s mobile-friendly travel information website, TripCheck.com. The site features:

- Maps updated in real time that display road conditions.
- Color-coded traffic speeds on most roads across the state.
- Trouble spots — whether from a traffic incident, inclement weather, construction or maintenance.
- Alerts: These are high-impact incidents prominently displayed.
- More than 700 camera images from key locations throughout Oregon as well as western Idaho, northern Nevada, southern Washington and northern California.
- Custom camera pages, where you can choose up to 10 different cameras for quick checks of specific routes.
- Waze user reports and incidents (overlaid on the TripCheck map).
- Information on trucking centers, safety rest areas, Sno-Parks and more.
- “Travel Time,” showing current travel times from key highway connections.
- Links to public transportation providers, schedules, planners and more, so you can explore car-free options.

TripCheck information is also available via Twitter. Visit TripCheck.com and click the On the Go tab 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, California, Nevada and Idaho state 511 systems for road conditions in those states.

REMEMBER: In Oregon, drivers are not allowed to use text or use handheld devices. We encourage motorists to pull off the road and park in a safe area before using mobile devices.

**Report a road hazard**
To report road hazards on state highways (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
- Willamette Valley, north coast: 503-362-0457
- Southern Oregon, 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. Thank you!

**Know Before You Go**
Visit 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 ##
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.

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

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 tires damage 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 vehicle’s owner manual: link chains may not be recommended for use on some types of vehicles.

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

Fabric alternatives to chains
- For vehicles that cannot be fitted with tire chains, a potential option is one of the fabric cover products — sometimes called “snow socks” — that slip over your tires. These are an option if you need temporary traction to get out of a snowy spot. They are only intended for short stretches of road in adverse conditions.
Know Before You Go: Visit 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 ##
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 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 ##
Be prepared for stormy driving conditions

You’re more likely have a safe trip in stormy weather if you and your vehicle are prepared in advance — and you drive with extra caution.

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

- Ensure the heater and defroster are working properly.
- Test all lights. Carry spare light bulbs.
- Use antifreeze that’s good to -25°F; check and fill washer and other fluids and make sure hoses aren’t loose or brittle.
- Keep wipers clean and in good condition; fill the windshield washer tank.
- Make certain your battery is fully charged (also check battery age and make sure cables are not loose or corroded).
- Ensure your tires are in good condition and properly inflated for best traction, including your spare.
- Carry chains or use traction tires in winter.
- Keep an automotive safety kit in your vehicle.

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

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

For more information:
Don Hamilton
Region 1 Public Information Officer
503-731-8265
don.b.hamilton@odot.oregon.gov
- 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 or charge

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. Bulky winter coats can reduce the effectiveness of your child’s safety seat. To keep them warm, add layers over them once they are buckled in.

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 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...

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. 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 ##
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, parking in a Sno-Park requires a valid permit displayed in the lower left corner of your vehicle’s windshield.

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 DMV offices and by permit sales agents at many sporting goods stores, winter resorts and other outlets. These sales agents may charge an additional service fee for each permit they sell.

Annual 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.

For questions about how to buy a permit or information about becoming a Sno-Park permit sales agent, contact DMV Business Regulation at 503-945-5052. For a list of Sno-Park permit agents, visit DMV’s online service center: https://dmv2u.oregon.gov/eServices under the Permits subheading.

Sno-Park permits issued in California and Idaho are honored in Oregon, and Oregon permits (except for interim annual 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 ##
Some snow-seekers heading to winter recreation areas via state highways find designated parking areas filled and then create safety issues by parking on roadsides.

This parking creates significant safety hazards when people exit their vehicles and walk across the highway to reach their destination. It’s also dangerous for vehicles traveling through the area, for emergency vehicles and for snow plows.

Travelers in winter recreation areas should remember to:

- Slow down and use all your best winter driving skills, especially in snowy conditions and in the upper elevations.
- Watch out for people next to the road. Unexpected snowball fights, sledding and other winter activities often take place dangerously close to the highways.
- Be extra alert for snow removal equipment. Vehicles parked at the side of the road prevent plows and other equipment from doing their job.
- Find a safe and legal place to park.
- Expect extra traffic congestion during high volume holiday weekends.

We’re seeing the problem on major state highways, including U.S. 26 and OR 35 around Mount Hood and OR 372 (Century Drive, south toward Mount Bachelor). This problem is especially concerning on busy freight corridors. Under state law, non-emergency parking on state highways, including shoulders, is illegal in areas marked with no parking signs. Violators risk a ticket and a tow.

Parking is allowed in designated areas, such as Sno-Parks. Oregon has about 100 Sno-Park sites dedicated to winter recreation parking. The sites can be found throughout the state in all mountain passes and at most recognized ski, snowmobile and snow play areas.

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

## ODOT ##
Use common sense when using GPS navigation

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 passable in all weather conditions.

Navigation systems and similar smartphone apps are great tools, but travelers should 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

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 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 ##
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.** 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 mph, 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

On average, travelers on Oregon roads experience the most crashes every year in December, with more than 4,920 crashes across the state annually over the past 10 years*. November is close behind, averaging 4,700 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!

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*2010-2019, the most recent statistics available.
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 ##

For more information:
Don Hamilton
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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. 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.

## ODOT ##
Landslides are large masses of unstable rock, soil and debris that move down sloped areas. More common are pop outs, smaller quantities of rock, soil and debris that may be a few dozen to a few hundred yards. Landslides and pop outs can be triggered by heavy rain, ongoing erosion, earthquakes or human activity. When there’s a landslide on a highway, there may be pavement damage, closed roads, or detours. Landslide cleanup may take some time, especially if the slide is still moving.

ODOT monitors dozens of active landslide areas throughout the state. We use tools to help slow them down, such as clearing ditches and installing pipes and culverts to help drainage during heavy rains, stabilizing the soil with stone columns to pin soil layers together — think of a toothpick holding together a tall sandwich — and installing walls or fences to help hold landslides back from the highway.

Here are some tips to consider:

- Plan ahead. When the ground is saturated by rain or snow, especially after a dry spell, know that slides can occur.
- Be aware of your surroundings and ready to react should conditions change.
- Watch for rocks, water and mud on the road — especially during and after heavy rain. They can be signs of a slide. Watch for collapsed pavement.

If you can’t see the road, don’t drive through. Stop, back up, turn on your hazard lights, and call 9-1-1 to report it. Be careful and keep your distance as more may be coming down the hill — or moving from underneath the road.

Know Before You Go
Visit 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.

For more information:
Don Hamilton
Region 1 Public Information Officer
503-731-8265
don.b.hamilton@odot.oregon.gov
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.
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.
Power failures can affect highway systems

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 also 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 be careful.

Know Before You Go: Visit 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 ##
If you need to travel this winter, options for bus, train or sharing a ride are available.

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, regional bus services offer connections.

Here are some options:

- Plan your trip using Get There Oregon, https://getthereoregon.org. You can enter your starting and ending locations and select the transit option to find information on routes.
- Use the Ride Board feature in Get There to find a one-time shared ride.
- Amtrak Cascades train and Cascades POINT bus offer lots of options in the Willamette Valley and beyond (Eugene to Albany, Salem and points in Portland, also on to Seattle and Vancouver, B.C.): www.amtrakoregon.com (POINT bus tickets are sold by Amtrak.)
- POINT intercity bus service, making connections all over the state: www.oregon-point.com.
- For COVID-19 resources and information, visit our Public Transportation Division website: www.oregon.gov/odot/RPTD/Pages/Coronavirus.aspx.

Know Before You Go: Visit 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.
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.

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.
For more information:
Tom Strandberg
Commerce and Compliance
Public Information Officer
541-963-1330
thomas.m.strandberg@odot.oregon.gov

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 reduce winter weather-related truck crashes and save motor carriers and the traveling public time and money,” CCD Administrator Amy Ramsdell said. “Safety is the 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, 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**, 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 ##
Prepare for slippery weather travel now! Oregon law requires all commercial vehicles to carry chains whenever road conditions might require their use during your trip and signs are posted.

The law also requires vehicles to chain up when signs tell you that conditions ahead require them.

Start carrying chains before the weather takes you by surprise. And before every trip, visit TripCheck.com for current road and weather conditions and more on Oregon chain requirements.

Cost of trucks without chains
The estimated cost of delays caused by trucks failing to follow Oregon chain laws is over $8 million a year — to the motor carrier industry and other highway users. When a truck loses traction, it can not only delay its delivery but also delay everyone else on the road behind a stuck truck.

Keeping Oregon moving is so important to motor carriers and all Oregonians that the 2021 Oregon Legislature raised the fine for trucks failing to use chains to $880. That law took effect Sept. 25, 2021.

If a truck is involved in a crash where failure to use chains is a factor, there could be other costs for the motor carrier — not to mention other travelers. Don’t be the driver stopping miles of traffic behind you! The time it takes to chain up will get you to your destination faster and reduce the chances of a costly delay.

## ODOT ##

For more information:
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Hefty fines for trucks failing to use tire chains in Oregon
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, if it has a brake that operates while in tow, 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:

![Symbol](image)

“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 Nov. 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 that chains or traction tires be carried are subject to a class C traffic violation. Not using chains or traction tires when signs indicate they are required could result in a specific fine traffic violation with an $800 fine. More information about Oregon’s chain and traction tire laws is available at TripCheck.com.

## ODOT ##
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 be on the job. 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.

Sand is very effective but the most labor intensive of our winter maintenance tools. It provides significantly improved traction on the roads in both snow and ice. But it spreads everywhere and can be found along the road surfaces and shoulders once the snow and ice are gone.

That scatters rock chips everywhere, a particular danger for windshields and bicyclists. We send our ODOT crews out for cleanup as soon as possible, particularly in the lower elevations. In the higher elevations, crews often wait until spring to clean up the sand as we don’t want to clean sand up only to apply a new layer when a new storm arrives soon after.

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 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 ##
Our goal is to use the right tool at the right time in the right place 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 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.

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 won’t 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 and 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. Salt is approved for use on all interstate highways in Oregon in addition to other highways as approved.

ODOT has:
- 27 solid salt storage sites around the state with about 19,000 tons of capacity.
- Three salt storage sheds in the Portland area.
- One salt storage shed in Cascade Locks, serving the Columbia River Gorge, with 5 million pounds capacity.
- 105 liquid deicer storage locations with about 2.2 million gallons of capacity.
- New salt storage sheds planned statewide but not yet funded.

We continue to analyze our use of salt. Since each storm is different, we cannot say 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 three to five 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 TripCheck?

- Travel conditions
- Real time updates
- Twitter alerts

TRAFFIC CAMS

- Statewide traffic cameras

INCIDENT ALERTS

- Weather
- Construction
- Crashes

SPEED MAP

- Travel options, Waze reports... and more!

STATEWIDE TRAVEL TIMES

Know before you go.

Source: www.TripCheck.com
Putting on Tire Chains

When installing 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.

Know before you go.

Stay dry!
- A brightly colored jacket or a reflective vest,
- A hat,
- Warm gloves!
- Use a tarp or plastic sheet to protect yourself.

Want to learn more?
Watch our YouTube video:
www.youtube.com/oregondot

Stay safe on the road!
Winter Travel Checklist

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

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.
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.

- Avoid blind spots.
- Drive slowly.
- Increase your following distance.
- Never pass a snowplow on the right.
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.

www.oregon.gov/ODOT/COMM/Pages/winterdriving.aspx
Bicycle Commuting in Winter

Choose the Right Equipment
- Mountain bike
- Sturdy tires
- Fenders
- Bright light in front
- Red light in back
- Reflectors

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

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

Source: Commute Options (www.commuteoptions.org)
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 (*677)

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 FlashAlerts

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 be on the job. But remember: our goal is to keep roads passable, not completely free of ice and snow.