

*Greetings  
from Eastern*

December  
2022



## Winter Roadway Guide

In this issue



Oregon  
Department  
of Transportation

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# Welcome to this year's Winter Roadway Guide

Welcome to another edition of the Oregon Department of Transportation's Winter Roadway Guide, your local source for highway construction news and winter driving information.

First, I would like to introduce myself. I am the new ODOT Region 5 manager, replacing Craig Sipp who retired earlier this year after 37 years of state service. Prior to this position I was the ODOT Area manager here in eastern Oregon, working closely with the various cities and counties on this side of the state. Having grown up in northeast Oregon, I look forward to continuing our work to improve safety along the vast transportation network that we all rely on every day.

## Recent accomplishments

The 2022 construction season was another busy one with several dozen projects completed. These included projects that resurfaced highways, repaired or replaced bridges and culverts, and enhanced safety in all eight eastern counties. Over the past year ODOT contractors and maintenance crewmembers completed the following:

- Resurfaced over 300 lane miles of highway.
- Repaired or replaced over a half-dozen bridges and culverts
- Upgraded over a hundred ADA curb ramps.
- Upgraded several signalized intersections.
- Improved sidewalks and bicycle paths in downtown areas.



ice and snow, encountering heavy fog, and how to prepare your vehicle for the season. Do you and your family know what to watch out for when following snowplows and other winter maintenance equipment? Keep reading and you'll find out, along with links to useful websites, videos and more.

- Completed numerous other projects designed to keep traffic moving in a safe and efficient manner.

More details about accomplishments and future projects are in these pages.

## Community Outreach

Keeping our highways safe for you and your family is our primary goal. It's also important to meet and talk with community members, to share ideas and get feedback. We do this through in-person and online public meetings, actively participating in community events like fairs, Cinco de Mayo celebrations, and visits to school classrooms. We even worked with the kids at the Weston Middle School to name one of our snowplows! Read on for more about "Baby Snowda" and other outreach activities.

## Driving tips and more

Along with information about accomplishments and future projects, a primary focus of every edition of the Winter Roadway Guide is to share winter driving safety tips. Please see enclosed articles about driving on black

## Stay safe and travel prepared

With winter crews on the road, please watch out for our plow operators and fellow motorists. Set aside distractions and drive according to the conditions of the road. That means slow down if rain, snow or ice is present. Also, don't forget to check TripCheck.com on the web or call 511 for updated highway conditions before getting behind the wheel. You'll see what highways might be closed and be able to view images from hundreds of roadside cameras.

I hope you find this information useful, and thank you for keeping safety in mind throughout the season.

Wishing you safe winter travels,

**Ken Patterson**

Oregon Department of Transportation  
Eastern Oregon Regional Manager



# Low-visibility conditions require extra measures

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.



## Be seen - use headlights at all hours in winter!

Turning on your low-beam headlights during the daytime in the winter months can help make your vehicle more visible to other drivers, bicyclists and pedestrians.

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.

## Past summer chip seals mean adjustments for winter plowing

Motorists traveling on eastern Oregon highway sections that were chip sealed this summer can expect a bit more snow on the roads after they are plowed by Oregon Department of Transportation maintenance crews. Parts of: OR 207 in Umatilla County; OR 74 in Morrow County; OR 86, Hwy. 413 and 414 in Baker County; U.S. 26 and U.S. 395 in Grant County; and U.S. 20 in Malheur County all receive chip seal treatments. Because chip seals can take over six months to harden, scraping the road surface with our plows before the pavement is fully cured could damage it. On newly chipped seal highways we use special metal plates called shoes that keep the plow blades about an inch off the road surface. You will need to slow down and pay extra attention in and near these highway sections when snow or ice is present:

- OR 207 in Umatilla County from milepost zero to 22.
- OR 74 in Morrow County from milepost 46 to 83.
- OR 86 from milepost 10 to 70.8 (most of the highway starting 10 miles east of I-84).
- Sections of Hwy. 413 and 414 in the Halfway area.
- U.S. 395-B between milepost 90 and 101 south of Long Creek in Grant County.
- U.S. 395-C between milepost 2 in Canyon City and 15.5 near Star Ridge in Grant County.
- U.S. 20 between milepost 171 and 223, Warm Springs to Harper

Junction in Malheur County.

- Sections of U.S. 26 from milepost 124 to 131 west of Dayville, and from milepost 154 to 161 between Mt. Vernon and John Day in Grant County.

"We recognize the importance of winter plowing operations, but also recognize the need to protect a significant infrastructure investment that will have long term benefits," said Transportation Maintenance Manager Shane Giffin.

Chip seals consist of rock chips pressed into a layer of oil and water mixed together, called an emulsion. This treatment is a cost-effective way to protect and extend the life of the road surface. Because the surface is prone to damage by plow blades during the first winter after the chip rock has been applied, we won't be plowing all the way down to the pavement on or near these sections. Sanding rock and deicer to improve traction may be used, where appropriate.

Most other highways will be plowed as close to the road surface as possible based on our highway maintenance level of service guidelines. We'll resume this practice on the recently chip sealed routes next season.

"Please be patient with your fellow motorists and our crews who are working day and night this winter to help keep you safe," Giffin said. "Always adjust your driving to the conditions of the road."

# A crash is no accident

Over 94 percent of all motor vehicle crashes are related to operator error. When it comes to impaired driving, there is no such thing as an “accident.” These crashes are 100 percent preventable. The word “accident” by definition is an event that was unexpected or unintentional.

Allowing this perception to continue in the world of impaired driving removes the accountability for the choices we make as drivers and motorcycle riders.

Our decisions have consequences... for ourselves, our families and for every other person on the road. By calling a crash a crash, we are describing what it is, without motive and without blame – but also without the implication that a person who may be responsible simply had no control or intent to cause harm, when, in fact, their choices, decisions and actions were the direct cause. This holiday season and every day of the year, please celebrate responsibly.



## Driveway snow can't go on 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. 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 Oregon Revised Statute 374.990.



Slick conditions and drivers not chaining up contribute to multiple freeway closures each year. A crash is no accident.



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# Local resident detour options when I-84 is closed

Interstate 84 in eastern Oregon may be temporarily closed at times due to severe weather, crashes or emergency service operations such as:

- Ice or snow events that result in motorists' inability to maintain control of their vehicles.
- Dense fog, blowing snow or dust events that limits visibility to less than 500 feet.
- Jackknifed trucks or vehicle crashes that block both traffic lanes.
- Emergency response operation.
- Life Flight landings/take-offs.
- Law enforcement crash investigations.

When a freeway closure event occurs ODOT will stop traffic in the closest community downstream from the initial closure location. This is done to prevent travelers from becoming stranded in areas without access to appropriate services (gas stations, restaurants, motels, etc.).

Unfortunately, this may also prevent local residents from getting home if they live in an area that is between the community-location closure and the actual incident site.

*Example: Westbound freeway is blocked at MP 310 due to crash south of Baker City. The route is closed at Exit 374 in*

*Ontario to prevent travelers from becoming stranded on freeway.*

*A westbound traveler who lives in Huntington may be stuck in Ontario for several hours, even when road conditions to Huntington are passable.*

## Accommodating local residents

To help get local travelers home under these circumstances ODOT may provide access to closed freeway sections when it is safe and prudent to do so. This process will only be available for local residents/deliveries and may require drivers to show picture identification with address to

prevent other travelers from becoming stranded on closed roadways.

In the event this detour option is available, a web link listing the details will be posted on **TripCheck.com** in the closure alert message.

"This won't be available during every closure, so people will need to check TripCheck.com for current information," said ODOT Public Information Officer Tom Strandberg. "If conditions allow, we'll try to get you home."

To learn more contact Tom Strandberg at 541-963-1330 or by email at [thomas.m.strandberg@odot.state.or.us](mailto:thomas.m.strandberg@odot.state.or.us).

## Icy conditions: what you should know

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.



# Winter travel safety begins with car care

Check the coolant (antifreeze); coolant should be flushed and refilled every two years in most vehicles; the recommended mixture is 50/50 antifreeze and distilled water.

Replace wiper blades every six months; consider snow blades if the weather dictates and make sure the washers are working properly and the reservoir is filled with solvent.

Oregon law requires child safety seats until they weigh 40 pounds or reach the upper weight limit for the car seat in use. Children over forty pounds or who have reached the upper weight limit for their forward-facing car seat must use a child seat with harness or a booster to 4'10" tall, or age eight and the adult belt fits correctly. Infants must ride rear-facing until they reach two years of age.



Test the battery; if it is three or more years old, it should be tested and replaced if necessary; even a strong battery that can deliver full power at 80 degrees F will have dropped to 65 percent of its output at freezing temperature.

Call 511 for road and weather information on state highways; you can also access toll-free within Oregon by dialing (800) 977-ODOT (6368); for those calling from outside the state, the long-distance number, (503) 588-2941, is still available.

Check tire depth and tire pressure; tire air pressures decrease in cold weather; if you're planning on driving over mountain passes, purchase correctly sized tire chains, and practice installing them at home, rather than at the roadside when you're knee-deep in snow.

Prepare an emergency kit and put it in your vehicle now; include a pair of gloves, a pair of boots, a wool blanket, a flashlight, an ice scraper, high-energy snacks, first aid kit, jumper cables, a spare tire and jack, and a bag of sand or grit for traction.

## Wear safety belts every trip; no excuses

Safety belts and child safety seats save lives. The Transportation Safety Office of the DMV offers tips for using safety belts and child safety seats properly, and explains recent changes in safety seat laws. Buckle up. No excuses - it's the Way to Go!

For more information and a link to a three-minute video explaining Oregon's safety belt and child seat laws visit <http://www.oregon.gov/ODOT/TS/safetybelts.shtml>



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# Accomplishments in 2022 - transportation project highlights

It has been another busy construction season for ODOT crews and our contracting partners, as they improved safety along eastern Oregon's transportation system. Here are a few of the key projects we worked on in 2022.

## Pavement Improvements

Over the past several months, we resurfaced over 300 lane miles of roads. This included about 100 lane miles of asphalt or concrete paving on I-84 and U.S. 20. Another 200 miles of U.S. 20, U.S. 395, U.S. 26, OR 207, OR 74, OR 86, and other routes received protective chip seal applications. Several highways also had cracks sealed to help prevent damage from the elements and prepare them for future pavement resurfacing. Crews also cleaned dozens of miles of road shoulders to limit the impacts of erosion to our highways.

## Bridges

Bridges, overpasses and culverts play a crucial role in our highway system and require regular maintenance to keep traffic flowing smoothly and

safely. In 2022, we upgraded about a half-dozen I-84 bridges between Perry and Baker City. These included the Upper Perry overpass at Exit 256 west of La Grande, the North Second Street overpass in La Grande, the McAlister Lane overpass near Exit 265 east of La Grande, and the Exit 302 Richland Interchange overpass near Baker City.

Near Ontario in Malheur County, the Snake River Bridge on U.S. 30 received repairs. Further north in Wallowa County, construction started on the replacement Bear Creek (Wallowa River) Bridge along OR 82 near the town of Wallowa. The 80-year-old Bear Creek Bridge will remain in place until the new structure is finished and connected to the highway in 2024.

## Safety and Operations

*Improving transportation for those who walk and roll.*

Our task to bring thousands of eastern Oregon sidewalk curb ramps into compliance with current Americans with Disabilities Act standards won't be completed for a number of



Dozens of curb ramps in Baker City and several other communities were upgraded to meet current ADA standards.

years, but we are making progress. Cities that received ADA upgrades this year included: Pendleton, Stanfield and Hermiston in Umatilla County; Wallowa, Lostine and Joseph in Wallowa County; John Day in Grant County; and Baker City in Baker County.

In addition to this curb work, some communities received additional enhancements. Pendleton received traffic signal upgrades at the SE Court Avenue and SE 1st Street intersection. John Day is getting new bike lane, curb and sidewalk improvements between Southwest Sixth Avenue and the Grant Union High School. This Safe Routes to School funded project has been on the needs list for John Day and Canyon City for many years.

## New turn lanes

In Hermiston we restriped a section of OR 207 to extend the center turn lane several more blocks. The change is creating a safer roadway for all travel-



ODOT crews restriped this section of OR 207 (11th Ave.) in Hermiston to create a center turn lane.

ers, including motorists, pedestrians and bicycle riders.

For more project information check out our ODOT website, [tinyurl.com/odot5](http://tinyurl.com/odot5), or contact Region 5 Community Affairs Specialist Vicki Moles at 541.620.4527, email [vicki.l.moles@odot.oregon.gov](mailto:vicki.l.moles@odot.oregon.gov). Also, see the future projects article in this publication.



Contractors constructed a pavement overlay to sections of U.S. 20 in Malheur County.

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# Keep a safe distance from plows and sanders

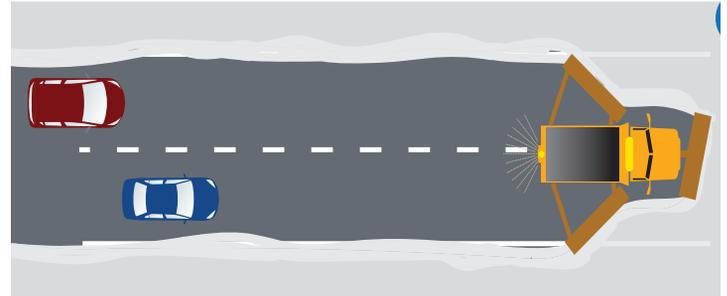
Drivers who try to pass on the right when a snowplow is in operation run the risk of damaging their vehicles, hitting the snowplow, or even going off the road. With ODOT's new dual-wing plows and tow plows, passing on the left can also lead to disaster.

On state highways, passing a snowplow on the right is illegal. On most Oregon highways, snowplows have "wing" plows that stick out more than 8 feet from the right side of the truck. With dual-wing trucks a plow blade could also be in the left lane. In addition, the snow being plowed or blown off the road can contain rocks and other debris damaging to vehicles.

The road behind the snowplow is in much better condition than the road ahead. If conditions are severe enough to require the attention of a snowplow, you should

use extra care when trying to accelerate and pass other vehicles. Ruts in the snow can grab tires and icy conditions can make it difficult to control the vehicle at higher speeds.

Drivers should give winter maintenance vehicles such as plows and sanders a wide berth. They travel slowly but pull over periodically to let traffic pass. The best advice is to stay three car lengths behind and give yourself more time to get where you are going.



**Oregon Department of Transportation Recruitment Announcement**

**We could use your help this winter!**

Help your neighbors and keep Oregon's roads safe this winter! We are looking for people to join our maintenance teams, where you'll clear and repair roadways by hand and by using heavy equipment. Two years of related experience is required, but we will provide training and may even help you get your commercial driver's license!

Visit [ODOTJobs.com](http://ODOTJobs.com) and search "highway maintenance specialist" to see up-to-date job postings.

Other positions are available. Check out our website and search for jobs by title and/or zip code location.

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## 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

# It's so nice to meet you

As communities in eastern Oregon began coming together again after two years of virtual meetings and event cancellations, engaging with the public took on a whole new meaning for ODOT staff. From our maintenance crews, district, region and DMV staff, employees have been “in person” again at a variety of events all over eastern Oregon this year!

## Fairs and rallies

For over twenty years, ODOT has staffed a booth at the Union County Fair. That traditionally includes over a dozen different staff taking shifts to cover the multi-day event, and several others participating in the fair parade. This year, not only did we have a booth

and parade representation, but for the first time, we staffed a booth at the Umatilla County Fair in Hermiston. As a new outreach event for this area, crews were excited to provide safety information and project updates to the public. Both county fairs also featured an automated flagger assistance device (AFAD) on display to allow the community to see the equipment up close and personal, while learning about how and why it is used. Both fair booths were considered to be a huge success and we are excited to have a presence in another county in 2023!

In addition to expanding to the Umatilla County Fair, staff also partnered with Team Oregon Motorcycle Safety to staff a booth at Bike Week Motorcycle

Rally in Pendleton. This was a unique opportunity to share safety information and project updates with a variety of attendees from near and far.

## Big trucks and Baby Snowda

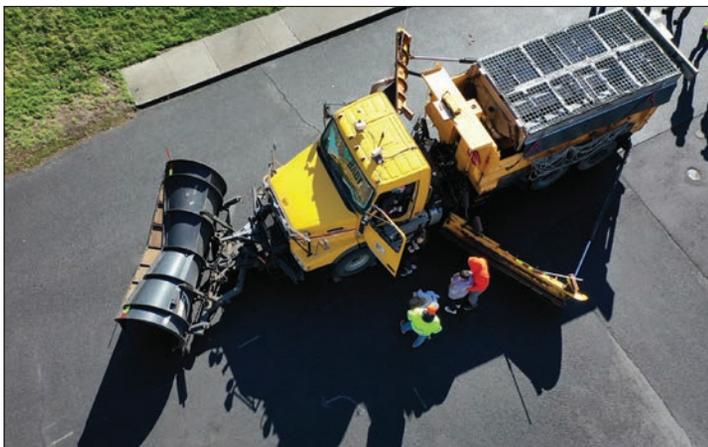
Staff members also participated in a variety of smaller events throughout the year. Examples include partnering with the Head Start in Hermiston for their “Big Trucks” themed event, staffing a booth at Baker City’s Community Night Out, and providing information and a fun family activity at Kidsfest in Enterprise. We also staffed a booth outside the DMV during Pendleton Round Up, participated in child passenger safety seat checks in Pendleton, bike safety and education in Baker City, and much more!

Perhaps one of the most exciting events we participated in this year occurred at Weston Middle School in March. Students there showed their appreciation for the hard work our maintenance crews do by creating “thank you” cards they sent to area ODOT crews. The card not only helped to boost the spirits of crew members but it sparked a fun idea: we invited the students to name one of the Pendleton Crew’s snowplows! We worked with school staff to arrange a visit with the snowplow that the students named “Baby Snowda.” The visit included

a safety discussion and Q&A, and the opportunity for the kids to see a snowplow up close and personal. They got to sit in the driver seat, honk the horn, climb up the back to look in the sand hopper, and ask questions. It was a day to remember! (Check out our video at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zIeqZgJPeZA>)

## Why engagement is important

As an agency, we’re often viewed in our communities mainly as plow drivers and roadway workers. While those are some of our most important tasks, it’s vital to our success that we engage communities as often as possible regarding our different projects and program. This not only shares vital information, it helps with recruiting new employees while reminding everyone that we are also members of the community with families and friends. This goes a long way in humanizing our work – and ultimately results in positive impacts for the safety of our employees and the communities we serve. This is the premise behind increased in-person outreach as well as our expanded radio campaign where ODOT staff voice radio spots with project updates and safety information. Please continue to listen for us on the radio and watch for us in your communities!



Middle School students spend time getting to know Baby Snowda, the snowplow.



ODOT Staff pose next to Baby Snowda during the Weston Middle School visit

# A look inside ODOT's winter storm toolbox

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.

Travel at speeds appropriate for current road and weather conditions. Carry chains when you travel through Oregon's snow zones.

## 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. In eastern Oregon salt is primarily used on the interstate system and some secondary highways, depending on the need and a variety of other factors. Typical salt application rate is around 200 pounds per lane mile.

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 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 added new tow plows and dual wing plows in eastern Oregon that can clear two lanes of freeway in one pass. The new plows function as a "force multiplier," doing the work of two trucks with only one operator. This helps free up crews and equipment that may be needed elsewhere.



ODOT's dual wing plows can clear two lanes in one pass.

**Tires LES SCHWAB**

**ON THE ROAD THIS WINTER**

**STAY SAFE**

**SLOW DOWN**  
Leave early. Add cushion to your normal drive.

**SKID SMARTS**  
Learn how to handle your car BEFORE you go into a skid.

**BE PREPARED**  
Road delays happen. Put together & carry a road trip safety kit.

**HAVE PATIENCE**  
Be willing to wait for better road conditions.

**SKID 101**  
Winter driving classes are a great idea.

**SHOULDER SAFETY**  
If you pull over, get as far on the shoulder as possible, turn off headlights & turn on hazards.

**DON'T CRUISE CONTROL**  
Your tires may spin too fast on slick roads, causing you to lose control.

**BE SEEN**  
Turn on your low-beam headlights even during the day.

**PASSING PRECAUTION**  
Allow lots more distance for passing – or just don't pass.

**KEEP YOUR (STOPPING) DISTANCE**  
It can take 10 times longer or more to stop on ice.

**YOU'RE IN LES SCHWAB COUNTRY**

# Be prepared for stormy driving conditions

Whenever there's a chance of stormy weather, the Oregon Department of Transportation encourages motorists to prepare their vehicles in advance and drive with extra caution.

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

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

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

- Turn off your cruise control.
- If you lose traction and your vehicle feels like it's floating, gradually slow down. Don't slam on the brakes.
- Use caution when driving on bridges or concrete highways. These surfaces are the first to freeze and become slippery when the temperature drops.
- Slow down in advance of shaded areas, especially on curves. Shaded areas are cooler and may have ice that is difficult to see.
- Don't pass snowplows or sanders, and don't follow them too closely; they will pull over!

- 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, or not at all.
- Don't blindly follow GPS navigation directions if they detour you off main highways.
- 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.

**Plan ahead – stay home if road conditions are bad**

Routes can be blocked for many hours by crashes, hazardous material spills or severe weather conditions. Think about the items you may need if your trip comes to a standstill on a remote section of road.

Pack food, water, extra clothes and blankets in case you get stuck in stalled traffic. If you travel with an infant or small children bring some toys, 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.

If conditions are too severe, or you don't feel comfortable driving, don't go. Save yourself the frustration and postpone your trip until conditions improve.

## Purchase your tire chains today and if you don't use them return in the Spring

You can return your unused light truck or passenger vehicle snow chains to any Les Schwab at the end of the season for a hassle-free, full refund.



**Tires LES SCHWAB**

5269404-1

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# Practice chaining up *before* bad weather strikes

In Oregon, there are times when you may be required to use chains on snowy or icy roads. It's important to learn how to install your chains **before** bad weather strikes.

Chaining up is good for both you and other drivers, especially on mountain roads. Travelers 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. You'll 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.

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 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.



## Fees increased for failing to chain up

The Oregon fine for commercial trucks failing to use chains when required increased last year to \$880 per violation. The 2021 Oregon Legislature raised the fine to encourage compliance and improve safety. For instance, when a truck loses traction and becomes stuck or crashes, it can delay hundreds of other travelers impacted by blocked lanes. Crashes on Oregon highways and freeways can block traffic for many hours depending on the location, weather conditions, severity of crash and availability of incident responders.

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.



## 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.

### Know before you go.



#### Want to learn more?

Watch our YouTube video:  
[www.youtube.com/oregondot](http://www.youtube.com/oregondot)



## Use common sense when GPS navigation detour routes are given

When roads are closed and your GPS navigation system is directing 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 into consideration current road or weather conditions. They may direct you onto remote and un-serviced roads that are not maintained or passable in all weather conditions.

Navigation systems and similar smart phone 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 (on your computer and on your phone) to get the latest on state road conditions.
- Remember, in winter conditions (as in summer's fire season conditions), 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 100 percent sure of the route and road conditions your GPS device is directing 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 continually work 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 and these will be updated continually on TripCheck.com.



The Oregon Department of Transportation is an Equal Opportunity Affirmative Action employer. ODOT does not discriminate on the basis of disability in admission or access to our programs, services, activities, hiring and employment practices. Questions: 1-877-336-6368 (EEO-ODOT) or call statewide relay at 7-1-1. The information in this publication is available in alternative formats upon request. Please call Tom Strandberg at 541-963-1330, or call statewide relay at 7-1-1.

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- Submit an address change.
- Check if a custom plate is available.
- Start your vehicle title process.



# Looking ahead to 2023 transportation projects



Trucks lined up near Exit 216 during eastbound I-84 closure. The Exit 216 Safety project will help direct trucks and other vehicles off and on the interstate during closure events.

Construction crews and contractors have once again completed a busy season of transportation projects. As maintenance crews are now working to keep highways open for winter travel, we are preparing for another round of projects in 2023 that include pavement upgrades, bridge repairs, sign improvements and pedestrian safety enhancements. Here are highlights of some projects you will see in 2023.

## Pavement Upgrades

Paving projects are a necessary part of our highway maintenance. Sometimes we need to replace road surfaces with new asphalt or concrete. Other situations require patching or chip seal resurfacing to protect and extend the life of existing pavement.

The multi-year paving project that started in 2021 on Interstate 84 between Meacham and Spring Creek continues in 2023. This project is constructing concrete paving in slow/truck lanes and replacing asphalt in the fast lanes along this 10-mile stretch. Most of the work is complete, with remaining tasks finished in 2023.

Pavement repairs are slated for Interstate 84, from Emigrant Hill to Meacham. Other pavement preservation projects include OR 203 from Union to Catherine Creek in Union County, and OR 205 from the junction of Steens Highway to Roaring Springs Ranch in Harney County. We will apply chip seals along U.S. 730 and OR 11 in Umatilla County, and select highways in the Ontario area.

Road enhancement projects that include freight and safety improvements will be constructed on U.S. 20 from Riley to Cairo Junction, and OR 201 from Cairo Junction to Ontario near I-84 Exit 374. Morgan Lake Road, southeast of La Grande in Union County, will be widened and new guardrail installed.

## Bridges

Bridges and overpasses are critical pieces of our highway system. Keeping them repaired and in good

condition allows traffic to flow smoothly and safely. In 2023, we will work on interstate bridges at the Benson Creek and Moores Hollow interchanges in northeast Malheur County and the North Powder interchanges over OR 237.

The Catherine Creek Bridge at Woodruff Lane in Union County will be replaced to address weight restrictions.

The multi-year project to replace



Repairs to the Benson Creek and Moores Hollow interchange bridges will be made, including fixing erosion issues like this.

the Bear Creek (Wallowa River) Bridge on OR Highway 82 near Wallowa continues in 2023. Sections of the old bridge were deteriorating. The new structure will create a safer crossing that meets current standards for all users. The new bridge is being built adjacent to the old structure to limit traffic impacts.

## Safety and Operations Pedestrian

Your safety is a priority for ODOT. While many ODOT projects revolve around vehicles, we are also committed to safety for those who walk and roll. Eastern Oregon's curb ramp program continues to bring more than 3,000 curb ramps up to Americans with Disabilities Act standards. We will continue these efforts in 2023 in the following locations: Umatilla County cities of Pendleton, Hermiston, Athena, Helix, Milton-Freewater, Pilot Rock

and Ukiah; Harney County cities of Burns and Hines; Grant County cities of Canyon City, Dayville, John Day, Long Creek, Mt. Vernon and Prairie City; Baker County city of Huntington; and Malheur County cities of Jordan Valley, Ontario and Adrian.

In addition to the curb ramp work, Hermiston will receive new sidewalks along the west side of OR 207 between Orchard Avenue and Highland Avenue. Work includes a 6-foot paved shoulder, curb ramp upgrades, lighting, and a rapid flashing beacon.

## Signs and Traffic Management

Highway signs and signals direct travelers to their destinations and play an important role in traffic safety.

Sections of I-84 between Cascade Locks and Arlington are scheduled to receive sign upgrades. Spread over a couple of years, this project will replace signs and sign structures that are in poor condition or do not meet current standards.

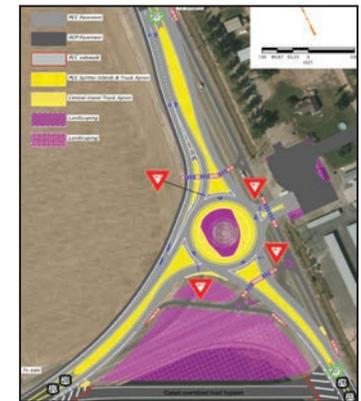
I-84 Exit 216 will receive traffic management devices to improve safety and traffic control in the event of closures in the Pendleton area or points east due to inclement weather or emergencies. When the eastbound lanes of I-84 close due to weather or a crash, traffic is typically halted at Exit 216 to prevent travelers from becoming stranded in the Blue Mountains. This project will help create a safer environment for managing the heavy traffic volumes that may need to be redirected off the interstate, until the route opens.

I-84 will also receive variable message sign (VMS) upgrades in a few locations between La Grande and Durkee. These signs provide real-time information to travelers, alerting them to highway incidents or closures. Information displayed on variable message signs may be generated as a result of planned or unplanned events such as road construction, an accident or severe

weather conditions.

New traffic cameras will be installed throughout eastern Oregon for real-time weather and traffic condition information. Drivers can receive timely communication regarding the road ahead to help them avoid hazardous weather or long traffic delays. All across Oregon, you can check out hundreds of traffic cameras and weather stations to see the road ahead before your travel, or if you just want to see what the weather is like at the coast, at TripCheck.com.

Traffic signal safety improvements are scheduled for Baker City, La Grande, Island City, and Pendleton. The project will upgrade traffic signals, lighting and other equipment to reduce and mitigate



In 2023 work will start on the U.S. 20 Freight Improvement project that includes a roundabout at Cairo Junction where, U.S. 20 connects with OR 201 south of Ontario.

crashes at intersections.

Information about projects planned for next year will be shared through media announcements and posted on our ODOT website, [tinyurl.com/odot5](http://tinyurl.com/odot5). If you would like more information about these or other transportation projects, please call our Region 5 Community Affairs Specialist, Vicki Moles, at 541.620.4527, or email [vicki.l.moles@odot.oregon.gov](mailto:vicki.l.moles@odot.oregon.gov).



# Oregon Commercial Vehicle Chain Law

tripcheck.com/pages/chain-law

Oregon's chain law applies to *all highways* throughout the state. When you drive in winter conditions, you may see signs telling you to carry chains and when you are required to use them.

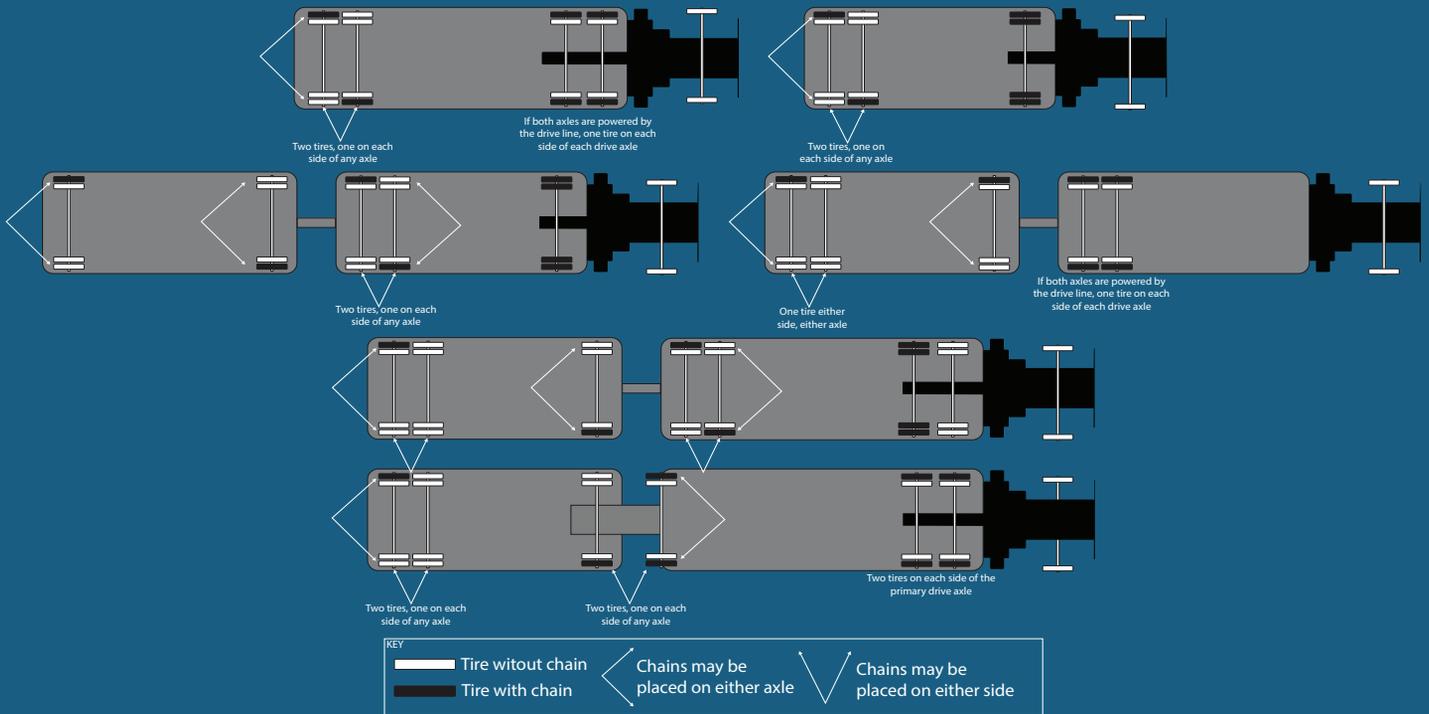


*Chains that are required on commercial vehicles must be placed on:*  
**Drive Axle**

- Super Single: on two tires, one on each side
- Tandem axle primary drive: two tires on each side of drive axle
- Tandem axle dual drive: one tire on each side of each drive axle

**Trailers**

- Two tires, one on each side of any axle



*This is a summary and does not include all configurations. For full details on Oregon's chain law requirements and all other configurations visit:*

[www.tripcheck.com/pages/chain-law](http://www.tripcheck.com/pages/chain-law)

To sign up for emergency text alerts, visit:  
[public.govdelivery.com/accounts/ORDOT/subscriber/new](http://public.govdelivery.com/accounts/ORDOT/subscriber/new)