



**KNOW
BEFORE
YOU GO**

WINTER TRAVEL NEWS PACKET

WINTER 2023 – 2024



**Oregon
Department
of Transportation**



Winter Weather Tips Page

THE OREGON DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION



Media contacts



Region 1: *Portland Metro Area, Mt. Hood, Columbia River Gorge*

Don Hamilton

503-704-7452

don.hamilton@odot.oregon.gov

Region 2: *Northwest Oregon*

David House *(Tillamook, Clatsop, Yamhill, North Polk, Marion)*

503-551-8641

david.j.house@odot.oregon.gov

Mindy McCartt *(Benton, Lincoln, Linn, Lane, South Polk)*

503-507-6045

mindy.m.mccartt@odot.oregon.gov

Region 3: *Southwest Oregon*

Julie Denney

503-949-2366

julie.denney1@odot.oregon.gov

Region 4: *Central Oregon*

Kacey Davey

541-280-2716

kacey.l.davey@odot.oregon.gov

Region 5: *Eastern Oregon*

Kacey Davey

541-280-2716

kacey.l.davey@odot.oregon.gov

DMV/Transportation Safety

Michelle Godfrey

971-304-9705

michelle.d.godfrey@odot.oregon.gov

Commerce and Compliance *(Motor Carriers)*

Shelley Snow

503-881-5362

shelley.m.snow@odot.oregon.gov

Statewide: Emergencies

Kevin Glenn

503-910-5965

kevin.glenn@odot.oregon.com

Katherine Benenati

503-871-0388

katherine.a.benenati@odot.oregon.gov

Shelley Snow

503-881-5362

shelley.m.snow@odot.oregon.gov

24/7 Road and Travel information

www.tripCheck.com



What's inside

Winter driving information in the ODOT Newsroom:
www.oregon.gov/odot/pages/winter-driving.aspx

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

Flash Alert updates:
www.flashalert.net — register for ODOT and DAS

Crash statistics for Oregon:
www.oregon.gov/ODOT/Data/Pages/Crash.aspx

ODOT winter maintenance photos and videos:
www.flickr.com/oregondot/
Winter Resource Album: <https://flic.kr/s/aHsjsncl1P>

www.youtube.com/OregonDOT
Winter Video Playlist: <https://tinyurl.com/mvrduvxz>

Winter driving tips brochure:
www.oregon.gov/ODOT/Documents/winter-driving-guide.pdf

**Social media accounts are generally staffed weekdays from 8 a.m. - 5 p.m. except in extreme conditions. For 24/7/365 coverage, please refer to www.TripCheck.com.*

2023-24 budget update

Your Responsibility

Know before you go — winter travel information
Driver responsibilities: be prepared, drive healthy
Oregon winters: be ready for any weather

- Take your time driving in the rain
- Use caution in snowy conditions
- Icy conditions: what you should know

Traction tires: you have options

Practice chaining up before you slip and slide

Abandoned vehicles are a hazard and will be towed

Use your headlights: nighttime and low visibility

Use common sense when using GPS navigation

Remember your travel options

Safe cycling in winter conditions

What We Do

Maintenance: levels of service

Why we can't 'just close the highway' for a storm

Winter ops vary between Oregon, Washington

A look inside ODOT's winter storm toolbox

Snow Zone signs tell you what's required

Hefty fines for trucks failing to use tire chains in Oregon

What you should know about hazard trees

Additional Information

Parking poses problems for pedestrians, plows

Power failures can affect highway systems

Reminder: driveway snow can't go in the road

Here's the scoop on Sno-Park permits

Wet weather means increased slide danger

Tips and resources for commercial drivers

Social Media Resources

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

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.

ODOT is an Equal Employment Opportunity and Affirmative Action Employer and does not discriminate on the basis of disability in admission or access to its programs, services, activities, hiring or employment practices. For questions, comments or to request this document or other ODOT publications in alternative formats, contact ODOT Civil Rights, 503-986-4350 or ODOT.TITLEVI@odot.oregon.gov.



2023–2024 Budget update

Inflation is increasing our costs, revenue from the gas tax is forecast to decline, and we face many restrictions on how we can spend available funding. As a result of all three of those factors, we made the difficult decision to cut maintenance services around the state, including winter maintenance activities..

To delay these cuts, Governor Kotek requested an infusion of \$19 million in emergency funding from the legislature and legislative leaders stated they intend to provide that funding during the short session in 2024. This infusion of funding is helping us restore winter maintenance services for the next two winters to be similar to what they were last winter.

We will use the funding immediately to:

- Authorize the use of overtime for our staff.
- Purchase new trucks that can plow snow.
- Resume fog line striping on low-volume roads.

This funding will make our roads safer this winter than they would have been. Without it, drivers, pedestrians, cyclists and freight haulers would have seen more potholes, more closures and delays, more chain requirements, and slower response times during winter.

We appreciate this emergency funding and are encouraged by the governor and legislature’s commitment to fund our transportation system.

We will continue to work with the governor and legislature to address our long-term structural funding issue.

We live in the communities we serve, take pride in our work and know that Oregonians rely on us. Maintaining Oregon’s transportation system is critical to the health of our communities and economy.

For additional details, please visit our [Transportation Funding website](#).

ODOT



Know before you go — winter travel information

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 X (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.

REMINDER: 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!

ODOT



Driver responsibilities: 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.

Driver's Responsibilities:

- Focus on driving. Conditions can change quickly, so it's important to focus on the road ahead. Put away distractions like cell phones 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: for example, marijuana or prescription drugs. Even over-the-counter medicines can affect your driving behavior.
- 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. Tell someone where you are going and what route you are taking. Keep them updated on any major route or arrival changes. 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.
- Be a smart driver: Slow down.
- Be prepared for slow traffic after a storm passes.
- 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.

Prepare Your Vehicle:

- 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.
- 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 a safety kit in your vehicle. A safety kit should include:
 - o A working flashlight (rechargeable or with extra batteries).
 - o Cell phone and charger.
 - o Extra food and water.
 - o Tools: jack, lug wrench, shovel, flares, pocketknife, jumper cables.

- o Road maps.
- o Blanket or sleeping bags.
- o Extra warm clothes: boots, coat, hat, gloves.
- o First aid kit (including prescription medication).
- o Matches or lighter.
- o Ice scraper and snow brush.
- o Paper towels.
- o Extra washer fluid.

If you travel with an infant or toddler, pack extra food, warm clothes, 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.

Responsibility on the Road:

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 4,900 crashes across the state annually over the past 10 years. November is close behind, averaging 4,555 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!

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:

- Start your trip with a full fuel tank or vehicle charge.
- Don't expect bare pavement.
- Turn off your cruise control.
- If you drive an electric vehicle, turn off your regenerative braking.
- 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.
- Don't drive fatigued. If you're feeling tired, find a place where you can safely pull off the road and rest.

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.



Oregon winters: Be ready for any weather

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

TAKE YOUR TIME DRIVING IN THE RAIN

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.

USE CAUTION IN SNOWY CONDITIONS

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 8 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.
- **People who ride bikes 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.
- **Turn off regenerative braking** if you drive an electric vehicle.
- **Carry chains and know how to use them.**
- **Make sure your vehicle is in top operating condition**, 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.
- **Be well-rested.** If you get tired, get a room and finish your trip when you're refreshed — you could save a life.

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. 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

Driving 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 extra space** between vehicles — about three times as much.
- **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.
- **Turn off regenerative braking** if you drive an electric vehicle.
- **Do not drive through snow drifts**: they may cause your vehicle to lose traction.
- **Put on chains** or other approved devices when signs say "Chains required."

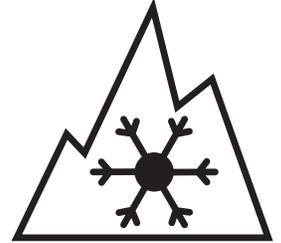
ODOT



Traction tires: you have options

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

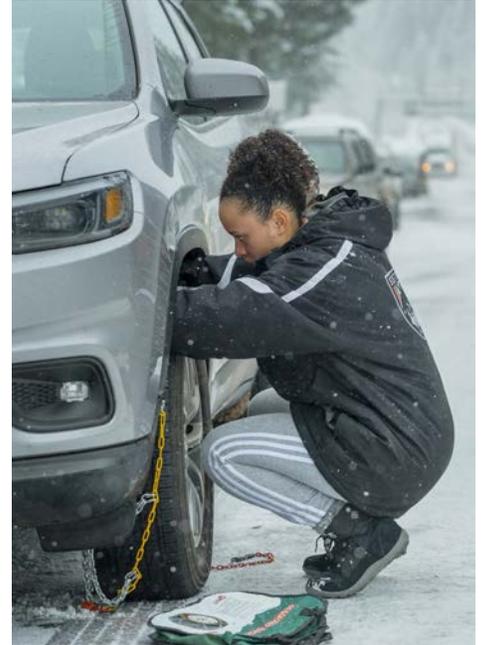


Practice chaining up before you slip and slide

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](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_8RVbDuyOcY) can help! Learn how to install chains by watching [youtube.com/watch?v=_8RVbDuyOcY](https://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](https://www.tripcheck.com), Oregon's travel information website, for up-to-the-minute road conditions and more information on Oregon's chain law and chain requirements. You can also get the latest in road conditions by calling 511.



Abandoned vehicles a hazard and will be towed

There are many reasons why people abandon vehicles on or next to highways, from severe weather to breakdowns or other emergencies. While it may seem easy to simply leave your car, its important to know that abandoning your vehicle can be dangerous and costly.

- **Be prepared and have a plan:** The best way to avoid costly towing fees or being a hazard to other drivers is to plan ahead and prepare for any trip you plan to take. Check the weather and use TripCheck.com so you can make sure that you and your vehicle are ready for what lies ahead. Make sure to keep up on regular maintenance with your vehicle; many abandoned cars are left after a break-down.
- **Don't be a hazard:** If something goes wrong and you must leave your vehicle, try to pull as far off the road as possible. Cars that aren't blocking traffic may not be towed for 72 hours, compared to ones that are – which will be towed immediately.
- **Signal for help:** If you are leaving your car, make sure to give law enforcement a heads up. Let them know where your car is, why you left it, and when you plan to return. If you don't have a way to call, leave a note on your dash with contact information and your plan. This may not stop your vehicle from being towed but will make it easier to communicate about what happens next. If you have no way to leave a note, leaving your hood up, cones out behind your car or hazard lights on is a good way to signal that something went wrong and that you need help.

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



Use your headlights : nighttime and low visibility

Whenever natural light is low, turning on your headlights can significantly increase your vehicle's visibility — and your safety.

In winter, low visibility conditions often occur during the day, caused by heavy rain, thick fog, snowfall, dust

or smoke. You can improve your vehicle's visibility in low-light conditions 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. 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.

Driving at night is more difficult because visibility is further reduced. Use your headlights to ensure that not only can you see what's ahead of you, but your vehicle can be seen as well. Improved visibility can help prevent crashes. 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.

Whether at night or in other low visibility conditions, follow these safety tips:

- **Slow down** and don't use cruise control.
- **Increase following distance.**
- **Keep your headlights clean** and your windshield clear. Get in the habit of cleaning off your lights at the gas station; that way you're ready for low-visibility conditions.
- **Eliminate distractions** so you can focus on the road.
- **Use your low beams in fog or during snowfall.** High beam lights could reflect light back, making visibility worse for you and other drivers.
- **Use your fog lights in foggy conditions** — 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.**
- **Pull off the pavement as far as possible** if you suddenly encounter a severe loss of visibility. 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**, 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 safety, so slow down and be ready to make other adjustments as road conditions change.

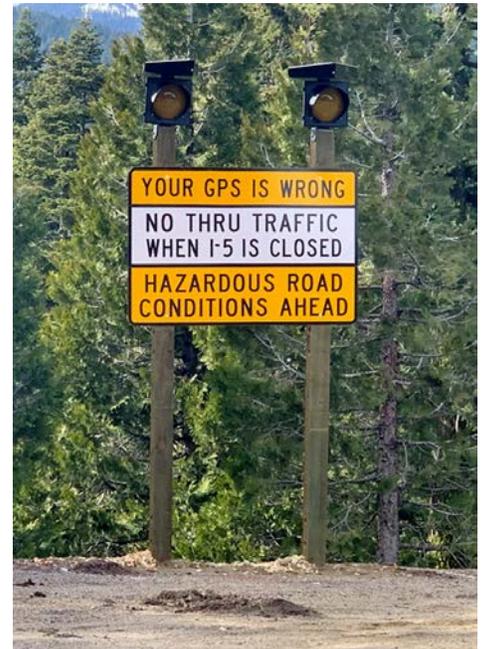
ODOT



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 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



Remember your travel options

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, 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.): amtrakoregon.com (POINT bus tickets are sold by Amtrak.)
- POINT intercity bus service, making connections all over the state: oregon-point.com.



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



Safe cycling in winter conditions

During the summer, cycling 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 cycling experience safe and successful:



Wear the right clothes, including:

- A good wind jacket over layers of clothing.
- A pair of wind pants or long underwear.
- Windproof mittens over insulating liners or gloves on milder days.
- A neck gaiter and warm hat under your bicycle helmet.
- A helmet cover with an ear band.

Use the right equipment, such as:

- A mountain bike with sturdy tires.
- A set of fenders.
- In icy conditions, studded bicycle tires.
- A bright halogen light on the front of your bike and a red light on the back.
- A reflective vest and reflective tape on your helmet and elsewhere.

ODOT

This information is provided by *Commute Options* located in Bend. *Commute Options* increases access to transportation options across Oregon. Learn more at commuteoptions.org.



Maintenance: levels of service

When weather is at its worst, ODOT's statewide Winter Level of Service Plan allows us to prioritize where to send equipment and resources. This year with costs increasing from inflation and fuels tax revenues trending down, we are scaling back maintenance and services around the state.

These cuts will affect drivers, pedestrians, cyclists and freight haulers. Here's what you are likely to see that could affect winter driving:

- During winter, you'll notice more snow and ice build-up, more chain requirements, longer delays and fewer open roads.
- You'll see more potholes and ruts on the road.
- You'll spend more time waiting for roads to re-open after a crash, and fewer ODOT responders on the road.

What can drivers do? This year it's more important than ever to plan ahead:

- Stay home during ice and snow storms if you can.
- Leave early to get ahead of storms.
- Carry chains and know how to use them.
- Have food, water, medicine and other emergency supplies in your car.
- Keep your cell phone charged.
- Have a full tank of gas or a full charge on your electric vehicle.
- Visit [TripCheck.com](https://www.tripcheck.com) for up-to-the-minute road conditions and more information on Oregon's chain law and chain requirements. Or get the latest in road conditions by calling 511.

Our Winter Level of Service Plan 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. We expect it to take longer this year to reach lower-volume roads. We may not plow some medium and low-volume roads at all.

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.

ODOT's winter maintenance practices may not reflect the practices used on county or city roadways. Contact your city or county for that information.



Why we can't 'just close the highway' for a storm

When a major storm hits Oregon's lowland highways, not just the mountain passes, people often ask us: Why don't we close highways when snow, ice or heavy rain or wind makes driving difficult or impossible?

If we can close Interstate 5 for snow on the Siskiyou Pass in southern Oregon, why can't we close highways in Portland or other Willamette Valley cities?

Our priority is to keep Oregon moving safely — travelers, freight, agriculture, emergency services, pedestrians, cyclists, people with disabilities, and people who depend on transportation for their livelihoods.

Even in severe conditions, when people are safer delaying travel, our ability to close highways is limited to small sections, such as in a crash or landslide. In a widespread event, especially in urban areas, it is impossible to close every access point onto highways and interstates.

Compared to a mountain pass, the number of access points in an urban area vastly outnumbers those on a mountain pass — and vastly outnumber the staff it would take to reach every on-ramp and highway intersection. While a single crew can close the one access to a section of highway on a mountain pass, we would need dozens of crews to staff on-ramps in and around a city just to close part of one highway.

We don't have the staff required, nor a way to get them all in place on short notice to close more than a small section of highway at one time. We focus our crews on preparing for storms with deicer and sand, as well as responding to emergency incidents and plowing major highways.

"The areas where we get severe weather most frequently do have some good closure plans, such as Interstate 84 or the Siskiyou Pass, that we use multiple times each winter," ODOT Maintenance and Operations Administrator Galen McGill said. "The transportation system in the Portland area is much more complex than a rural section of interstate."

Closing a mountain pass is not only simple and practical, but snow is a certainty every year at Oregon's higher elevations. Those locations need full-time crews to keep mountain passes open as much as possible every winter.

The Siskiyou Pass, 11 miles north of the California border, is a location where we can quickly close I-5 with a single crew. Dozens of times each winter, we do a "temporary hold" of I-5 traffic at milepost 11 for five minutes up to an hour so we can catch up with plowing and sanding the summit.

"We do temporary holds 30 to 60 times a winter to stay on top of the several feet of snow we get there," said Jeremiah Griffin of ODOT Region 3 including the Siskiyou Pass. "Temporary holds help us on Siskiyou Pass to catch up or get ahead of snowfall — and prevent people getting stuck in the first place."

Having a single point of highway access below the Siskiyou Pass also allows us to turn travelers around if a closure will last more than an hour. That way, travelers can wait and get services such as food or fuel, rather than wait on the

highway in severe weather. When snowfall exceeds our ability to keep up with it, we close the pass until we can make it safe for cars and trucks again. In the lowlands and major cities, severe weather is infrequent and much harder for weather forecasters to predict.

“Once weather does arrive, the amount of traffic in the Portland area makes closing and clearing the freeway very difficult,” McGill said.

Information is our most powerful tool to keep people, goods and services moving in Oregon — especially when a winter storm is on the way. We try to provide the latest weather, road, incident and traffic updates on Tripcheck.com. This helps travelers schedule their trips around severe weather or be prepared for it by carrying tire chains and planning for possible delay with full fuel tanks, blankets, water and snacks.

Information not only helps travelers avoid getting stuck in severe weather, it also helps us get traffic moving again.

“We cannot do our work to keep highways open if they are packed with travelers that are not prepared for conditions — no chains, trucks without chains, abandoned cars,” said Ted Miller of ODOT Region 1, the Portland Metro Area.

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



Winter ops vary between Oregon, Washington

No matter how much snow comes down, Portland and Vancouver never seem to maintain their roads in the same way.

The differences are complicated. It's all about meteorology, but also topography, geography, infrastructure, atmospheric, maintenance practices and how the Columbia River separates the two states.

Sometimes winter storms are simple and merciless. Like in 2008 when snow and ice blasted the whole region, Vancouver and Portland both.

But sometimes the differences are more marked. The differences were painfully highlighted on Feb. 22, 2023, when Portland got hit with nearly 11 inches of snow, the city's second snowiest day on record, while Vancouver, right across the river, received a mere two inches.

Vancouver, of course, had a far easier cleanup than did Portland. But the discussion lasted for days: Why the difference?

We have, you might say, a tale of two cities, or two states, or two maintenance departments.

Every weather system has its own characteristics, as the region learned in February 2023. On that day, the storm hit the Portland metro area and paused, dumping tons of snow in the east but less in the west. Portland got 11 inches, catching by surprise not just the National Weather Service but many of Portland's well-schooled and experienced TV meteorologists.

Storms sometimes arrive in the region out of the Columbia River Gorge, which is known for its microclimates. To generalize, we might see ferocious snowfall in Gresham and Troutdale that loses its oomph by the time it reaches Beaverton and Hillsboro.

The geographical distinctions are clear. Clark County's elevation reaches no higher than 3,000 feet while the Portland has a more complicated picture with the West Hills, I-5's Breeze Hill, Sylvan, the Coast Range and the roads reaching up to Mount Hood. Winter maintenance is more demanding at the higher levels.

In addition, the Portland area has more concrete highway lanes to maintain. Interstates 5, 84, 405 and 205, not to mention various loops, flyover ramps and major interchanges and another river, the Willamette, creating additional weather complexities. Vancouver, meanwhile, has I-5 and I-205, mostly flat highways.

Unlike Clark County, ODOT also chooses not to completely shut down highways during winter storms, allowing traffic to work its way along the roads even when it's slow-going. North of the river, crews sometimes close snowy or icy roads altogether giving their maintenance trucks time to reach bare pavement. In more populated Portland, completely shutting down a major road can create even more enormous disruptions in the midst of a storm.

Every weather system, the National Weather Service reminds us, is different. They may look similar to the public, but they all present uncomfortably different forces, subtleties and threats. Weather is very humbling.

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



A look inside ODOT's winter storm toolbox

Our goal is to use the right tool at the right time in the right place to protect travelers and the environment.

We have a variety of options in our winter storm toolbox to help keep our roads passable. We deploy each tool when we believe it will be most effective.



Liquid deicer

We typically use deicer before and during a storm to prevent ice and snow from sticking to the pavement. As with the other tools in our other toolbox, we use the lowest application rate needed to be effective. To protect water quality, we only use deicers that meet strict specifications. We have 105 liquid deicer storage locations around the state with about 2.3 million gallons of total capacity.

Solid salt

We use salt, which is an effective deicer, on all interstates in Oregon, as well as some connecting highways. We have 28 salt storage sites around the state with about 21,600 tons of total capacity.

We don't use salt for every snow or ice storm and we're continuing to study how it affects the environment, along with roads and vehicle surfaces. To help prevent corrosion, always wash your car after a winter storm, including the undercarriage.

Sand

When a deicer is not the best option, we use sand to provide better traction. When appropriate, we may mix sand with liquid deicer to help it stick to the road surface. We place barriers near waterways to capture scattered sand. We pick up sand after placing it — often repeating the drop and pickup cycle several times during a storm. Sand takes three to five times as long to pick up than it does to place it.

Snowplows

Plowing is the most efficient way to remove snow and ice from roads. It is most effective when liquid deicer or salt is used before plowing. We continually look for ways to innovate this process. In 2018, we acquired five tow plows and five 10-yard trucks with extra horsepower and 10-yard side discharge spreaders. Together, a truck and tow plow can plow two lanes at up to 55 mph — essentially doing the work of two trucks with one operator.



Snow Zone signs tell you what's required

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"

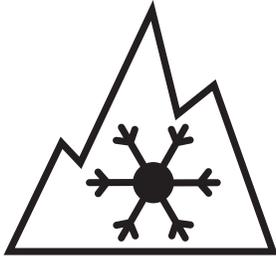
Vehicles towing or rated over 10,000 pounds GVW must use chains. Chains must also be used on a trailer or vehicle being towed if it has a brake that

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:



“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.



Hefty fines for trucks failing to use tire chains in Oregon

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.

Oregon law requires that all vehicles over 10,000 pounds gross vehicle weight carry chains whenever their use may be needed or required. You may also be fined for not having an appropriate set of chains for your rig.

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 Oregon Legislature raised the fine for trucks failing to use chains to \$880. That law took effect in September 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



What you should know about hazard trees

Forested roads are one of our state transportation system's best features, and many travelers take specific routes to enjoy their natural beauty. However, these forested roads can present a unique safety risk: hazard trees.

Hazard trees are damaged, dead, or dying trees that are likely to fall on roads, bikeways, sidewalks, or trails and threaten the safety of people or structures. Tree branches can also pose a similar risk.

Hazard trees are more common in the winter because snow and ice can weigh down trees and make them unstable. But summer wildfires can cause hazard trees, too, by burning away the tree's structural integrity. Unstable trees are more likely to fall.

No matter the cause, hazard trees are a common occurrence in Oregon, especially along roads through the Coast or Cascade mountain ranges.

We work year-round with professional, certified arborists to determine if a tree or branch is a hazard. Sometimes trimming certain branches will make a tree safe. In other cases, it's necessary to remove the entire tree.

You may encounter a tree trimming or removal project while traveling. Each project can affect the road differently — lane closures, reduced speeds, temporary stops, or a combination of all three — so the best thing to do is slow down and follow instructions from signs or flagger crews.

Trees falling on moving vehicles is rare, but it has happened. A more common experience is encountering a fallen tree or branch blocking a lane, or sometimes the entire road. Winter weather events like ice storms and high winds are the main culprit; they can bring down hundreds of trees and branches over a large area in a short time.

When that happens, we work quickly with local partners to respond to roads blocked by branches and trees. Our crews use chainsaws to cut the downed trees and branches to a manageable size and heavy vehicles to pull them out of the road.

We can't be everywhere at once, however. If an ice storm or high wind event covers a large enough area, we may close a long section of a road — or the entire road, if needed — to safely remove the downed trees and branches.

Like any other work zone, please slow down and give our crews space to safely remove trees and branches from the road. Even better: delay your travel or stay home if you're able to during these bad weather events. Fewer people traveling means our crews can work faster to clear the roads for essential services and travel.

One more thing: if you see cut logs on the side of the road but no crews are around, that is *not* an open invitation to stop and grab some logs for firewood. Stopping on the side of the road is dangerous, both for you and other travelers.



Parking poses problems for pedestrians, plows

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 see 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



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 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



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



Here's the scoop on Sno-Park permits

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](http://TripCheck.com) under Travel Center.



Wet weather means increased slide danger

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.

ODOT



Tips and resources for commercial vehicle drivers

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 X (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



Social media resources

Help spread the word about safe winter travel in Oregon

The social media copy and photo resources on this page are intended for federal, state and local partners across Oregon in transportation, emergency response, law enforcement, travel/tourism and safety programs to use for promoting safe winter travel tips and trip-planning resources in their own region. You can copy the posts as is, or use them to inspire your own safety and resource messaging.

Know Before You Go:

Twitter: Oregon Winter = Unpredictable weather. Plan your route and allow extra time for unexpected delays or weather hazards. Visit @OregonDOT's <http://TripCheck.com> for real-time updates and route planning tools! #OregonWinterReady #KnowBeforeYouGo

Facebook/Instagram: Plan winter highway travel with confidence. Visit <http://TripCheck.com> to view maps updated in real-time (by actual @OregonDOT dispatchers!) with info including road conditions, color-coded traffic speeds, trouble spots, weather, construction, maintenance and traffic incidents. You'll also find high-impact incidents prominently displayed as "alerts." Use #TripCheck to stay informed and plan your winter travel with ease. #OregonWinterReady #KnowBeforeYouGo

Twitter: Being #OregonWinterReady starts with TripCheck! Visit @OregonDOT's mobile-friendly travel information website for real-time road and weather updates. Save the site to your mobile home screen and the site will launch like an app! #TheMoreYouKnow <http://TripCheck.com>

Report It:

Facebook/Instagram: Need to report an Oregon highway hazard? It's as easy as 1, 2, 3!

1. Report a highway hazard to @OregonDOT @ORStatePolice shared dispatch by dialing *OSP.
2. Report drunk or impaired drivers by calling *677 from a mobile phone, or 911 from any phone.
3. Report a highway pothole? All you have to do is #AskODOT! Dial 1-888-ASK-ODOT for @OregonDOT's highly rated customer service hotline.

Twitter: Winter travel is for everyone! Even when it's cold, dark or stormy — it's still your responsibility to stay alert for people biking, walking or rolling. Share the road and give fellow travelers plenty of space. Learn more about bicycle and pedestrian safety and laws: <https://www.oregon.gov/odot/programs/pages/bikeped.aspx> #ShareTheRoad

Twitter: Don't let distracted driving steer you toward tragedy. Put your phone away, keep your eyes on the road, and avoid eating, drinking or grooming while driving. Learn more about the dangers of distracted driving: <https://www.oregon.gov/odot/safety/pages/distracted.aspx> #DriveFocused #DistractedDriving

Chains and Traction Tires

Twitter: Practice makes pro-ficient! Install your tire chains at home in clear weather. When snow hits, you'll be a pro! #WinterSafety #OregonWinterReady

Twitter: Don't slip up, chain it up! Practice installing tire chains at home. When winter strikes, you'll be ready to roll! #OregonWinterReady

Twitter: Snow socks, not just for your feet! When chains won't fit, slip on some fabric covers for temporary traction. #SnowSocks #OregonWinterReady

Twitter: Size matters! Check you manual, get the right chains and don't deflate those tires. Better safe than sorry on snowy roads! #WinterSafety #OregonWinterReady

Twitter: Safety first, speed second! When chaining up, stay under 30 mph, accelerate and decelerate gently, and drive cautiously. Chains won't make you invincible. #WinterSafety #ChainUp

Twitter: Snow Zones = Chain Zones. When you spot the sign, pay attention. Stay safe and keep those chains handy. Find snow zone locations and Oregon Chain Law on TripCheck.com and #KnowBeforeYouGo. #RoadRules #ChainUp

Twitter: Winter's grip can be icy! Remember, even with chains, you can slide. Slow and steady wins the safety race. #DriveSafe #WinterWisdom

Driving in Icy Conditions

Twitter: Bridges and overpasses: Winter's tricky spots! Remember to slow down, keep your distance, and tap gently on those brakes. #WinterDriving #WinterSafety

Twitter: Don't be fooled by the road's dark side — black ice! It's sneaky, thin and dangerous. Stay vigilant, even when the road looks wet. #BlackIce #OregonWinterReady

Twitter: Shady corners, sneaky ice! Watch for hidden hazards, especially when the sun's not around. Shadows can hide a dark truth. #HiddenHazards #BlackIce

Twitter: Cruise control, take a break! In icy conditions, keep your wits about you, not your cruise control. It's a slippery slope out there. #CruiseControl #WinterDriving

Twitter: Morning, night or shade's delight — black ice can sneak up on you! Stay on guard, and don't be fooled by its camouflage tactics. #BlackIce #WinterDriving

Commercial Vehicle Safety

Twitter: Big rigs, big responsibility! Before you hit Oregon highways, check your vehicle top to bottom. Lights, wipers, tires — they all matter. #TruckSafety #InspectFirst

Twitter: Snow, chains and treacherous mountain passes — Get the latest road info from TripCheck.com, including 24/7 traffic alerts from dispatch. Knowledge is your winter power. #WinterWisdom #OregonWinterReady

Twitter: Winter is coming and with it — the responsibility to be a safe and prepared trucker. Keep your rig in top shape, carry chains and follow Oregon Chain Law. Show other drivers what being a professional is all about. #TruckLife #WinterPro #OregonWinterReady

WHAT DO YOU GET
ON TRIPCHECK?



TRAFFIC CAMERAS

More than 700 camera images from statewide locations.



INCIDENT ALERTS

Real time alerts for weather, construction and crashes.



SPEED MAP

Current travel times for key highway connections in the Portland metro area.



TRAVEL INFORMATION

Roadside services, travel options, Waze reports and more!



CUSTOMIZED INFO

Ability to create and bookmark custom camera pages, get alerts.

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

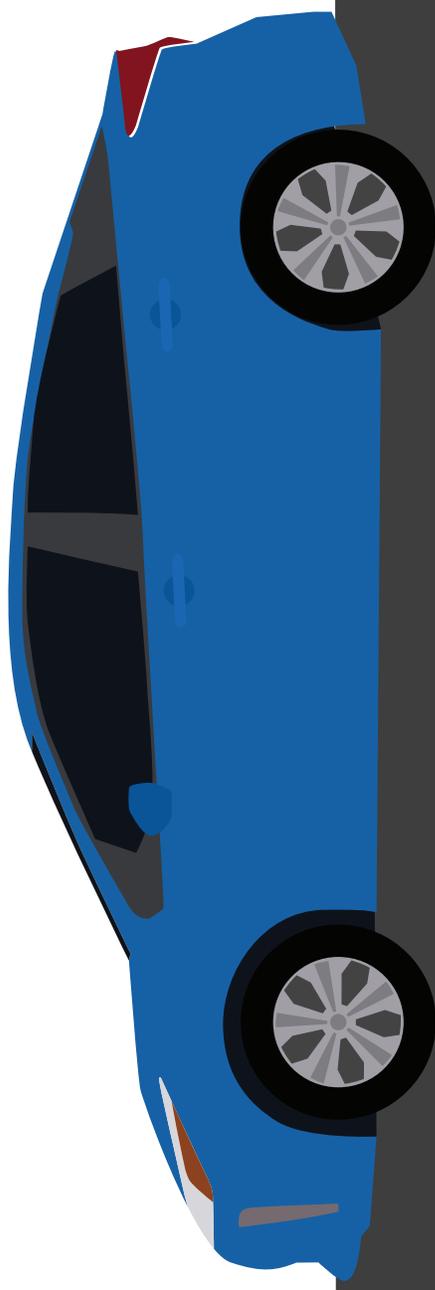


Be prepared

- 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

Winter Travel Checklist

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



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.

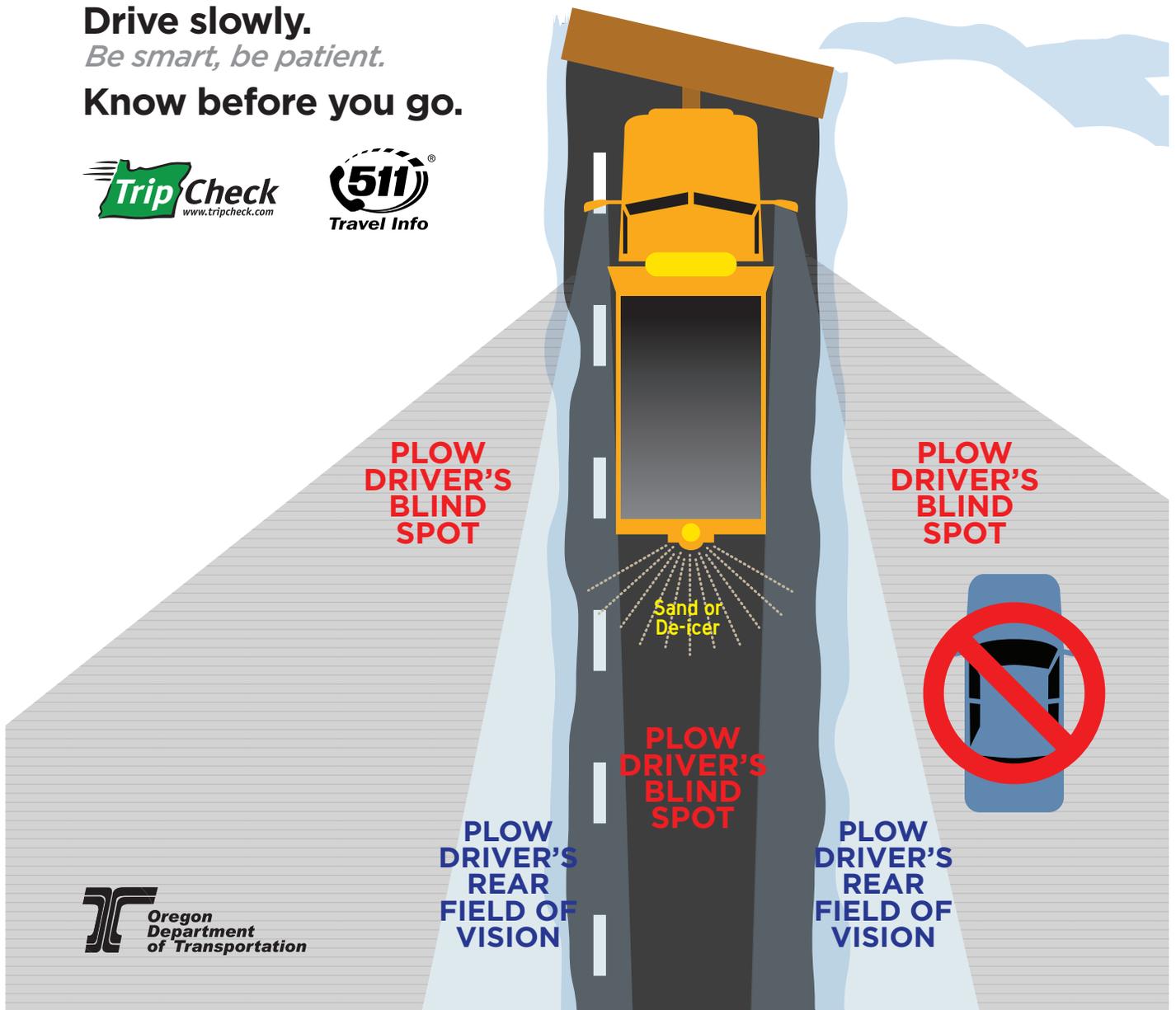
Avoid blind spots.

A plow driver's field of vision is limited.

Drive slowly.

Be smart, be patient.

Know before you go.



6

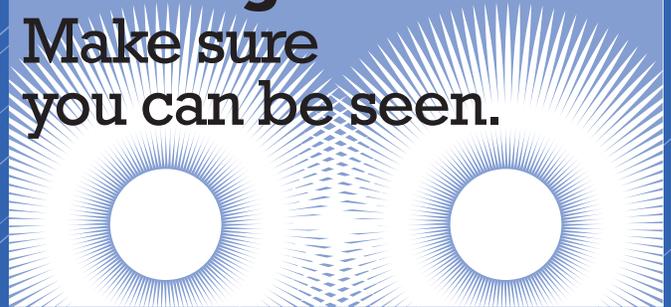
things to remember driving in the rain

Turn on your windshield wipers

Make sure you can see.

Turn on your headlights

Make sure you can be seen.



Turn off your cruise control

It gives you better control of your car.



Slow down!

Rain can make road surfaces slick.



Increase your stopping distance

It's harder to stop on a wet road.



Steer clear of standing water

Water can hide potential hazards.



Bicycle Commuting in Winter



Choose the Right Equipment

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

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



Reporting road hazards

Immediate road hazards (trees down, electric wires across the road, road blocked by mud or rocks, etc.) should be reported to Oregon State Police non-emergency assistance by dialing *OSP or *677 if you are calling from a mobile phone, or...

800-442-0776 Northern Command Center

- Non-emergency assistance for these counties: Benton, Clackamas, Clatsop, Columbia, Crook, Deschutes, Gilliam, Hood River, Jefferson, Klamath, Lane, Lincoln, Linn, Marion, Multnomah, Polk, Sherman, Tillamook, Wasco, Washington, Wheeler, and Yamhill.

or

800-442-2068 Southern Command Center

- Non-emergency assistance for these counties: Baker, Coos, Curry, Douglas, Grant, Harney, Jackson, Josephine, parts of Klamath, Lake, Malheur, Morrow, Umatilla, Union, and Wallowa.

If you are unsure which OSP dispatch to dial, call either office and they will assist you.

Dial 9-1-1 for life-threatening emergencies.

Road and weather condition phone numbers

Oregon

- www.TripCheck.com
- 511 inside Oregon
- 1-800-977-ODOT (1-800-977-6368) inside Oregon
- 1-503-588-2941 outside Oregon

Washington

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

California

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

Idaho

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

Nevada

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

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.

