

## Chain Law Information

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### Alaska

When you can't use chains depends on where you are in the state:

1. No chains between April 15 and Sept. 30 below 60 North Latitude;
2. No chains between May 1 and Sept. 15 above 60 North Latitude.

There is one exception. They are not allowed on the paved portions of the Sterling Highway from May 1 through Sept. 15. The commissioner of public safety shall by emergency order provide for additional lawful operating periods based on unusual seasonal or weather conditions.

### Arizona

Arizona states that tire chains of reasonable proportions can be used but only from October 1 to May 1 is when studded tires are authorized. Also, local authorities in their respective jurisdictions may issue special permits. Difficult passes in Arizona include 17-mile grade on I-17, Texas Canyon on I-10, Salt River Canyon on US 60/70, and US 60 near Superior.

### California

#### Summary:

California does not require trucks to carry chains during any specified time-period. When the weather hits, though, it takes at least eight chains for a standard tractor-trailer configuration to comply with the regulations. Conventional tire chains and cable chains, as well as other less conventional devices such as Spikes-Spiders winter traction devices, are permitted. Trucks with cable-type chains are legal but may be restricted at times because of severe conditions, which can happen commonly in the higher elevations such as Donner Pass. California is OK with automatic chaining systems. However, if you have automatic chains, you may still be required to add additional "traditional" chains to fully comply with the placement requirements. *Placement:* All four tires on the main (usually front) drive axle, the two outside tires on the other (usually rear) drive axle, one tire on each side of the trailer (front or rear axle, or staggered OK) & no chains are required on the steering axle. *Route Specific:* Chains are most often required in the higher mountain passes of Northern California, such as: Interstate 5 north of Redding; Interstate 80 over Donner Pass between Sacramento and Reno; and U.S. Highway 50 over Echo Summit between Lake Tahoe and Sacramento. *Chains are also sometimes required on these roads:* State Route 58 near Tehachapi between Bakersfield and Mojave; Interstate 15 over Cajon Pass between Victorville and San Bernardino; and Interstate 5 over Tejon Pass between Los Angeles and Bakersfield, Interstate I-80 at Donner Pass, Redding on I-5, Grapevine on I-5 Tehachapi on CA 58.

### Colorado

Colorado's chain law applies to every state, federal and interstate highway throughout the state. The chain law is in effect when drivers are notified by roadside signs.

- Level 1/Code 17 – Single-drive-axle, combination commercial vehicles must chain up all four drive tires. Cables are not allowed in this instance. All other commercial vehicles must have either snow tires or chains to proceed.
- Level 2/Code 18 – Chains are required for all commercial vehicles. Again, all four tires of single-drive tractors must be chained. For dual-drive-axle tractors, you're only required to chain four drive tires. Outside tires of drive axles must have chains. Inside tires may have cables.
  - If you get stopped without chains on this stretch of road, you will be fined \$50 plus a \$17 surcharge. If you violate Colorado's chain law, it can cost upwards of at least \$600. You can be fined \$500, plus a \$79 surcharge, for not putting on chains when required. If you block the roadway because you didn't chain up when the law was in effect, you can be hit with a \$1,000 fine, plus a \$157 surcharge.

*Routes:* Truckers traveling specifically on I-70 between mile marker 133, Dotsero, and mile marker 259, Morrison, must carry enough chains to comply from Sept. 1 through May 31. The state provides about two dozen chain-up locations along the I-70 corridor. **Also note:** Chains are required on every state, federal or interstate highway, metal chains must have at least nine (9) cross links. Driver may

be fined for not chaining when required, additional fines if unchained vehicle blocks roadway. Also, there are two level chain restrictions: A single axle tractor trailers must chain all four drive tires (cables are not authorized) and chains required for all commercial motor vehicles. Keep in Mind that ATDs are authorized & cables must be at least 0.415" diameter.

## Connecticut

Cables and chains are permitted only from Nov. 15 through April 30. No minimum number of chains is outlined in the regulations. Violations will start with a warning, but all subsequent offenses will result in a fine not more than \$200

## Delaware

Delaware permits the use of tire chains "for safety because of snow, ice or other conditions tending to cause a vehicle to slide or skid." The use of studded tires on all motor vehicles using the highways is permitted from Oct. 15 to April 15.

State officials can restrict travel on highways during emergency situations. Officials have three levels of bans to choose from.

1. Level I ban encourages extreme caution when traveling roadways and advises that nonessential travel be avoided.
2. Level II ban permits travel only by emergency vehicles, essential government personnel, health care providers, and vehicles carrying food and fuel.
3. Level III ban restricts travel to only emergency vehicles and essential employees such as snowplow operators. The Level III ban also prohibits retaliation by employers against employees complying with the travel ban

## Georgia

Georgia will permit the use of tire chains or tires equipped with safety metal spike studs upon any vehicle when required for safety because of snow, ice. The Georgia DOT may close or limit access to portions of a state highway because of inclement weather. In the event this occurs, signs will be posted to communicate to drivers that tire chains are required to proceed. For commercial vehicles with four or more drive wheels, tire chains must be installed on each of the outermost drive tires when driving on a road that has been declared "limited access" because of inclement weather. Previously, any four drive wheel tires required chains. "Tire chains" is defined as "metal chains (that) consist of two circular metal loops, positioned on each side of a tire, connected by not less than nine evenly spaced chains across the tire tread or any other traction devices as provided for by rules and regulations of the commissioner of public safety." Furthermore, any driver who causes a wreck or blocks the flow of traffic when not complying with the above laws on a limited-access highway will be fined up to \$1,000.

## Idaho

Officials in Idaho can determine, at any time, that Lookout Pass on I-90, Fourth of July Pass on I-90, or Lolo Pass on Highway 12 are unsafe, either individually or as a group. If that happens, signs will alert you to chain up. If the alert is in effect, you will have to chain up a minimum of one tire on each side of drive axles and one axle at or near the rear of each trailer. Idaho defines chains as two circular metal loops, one on each side of the tire, connected by not less than nine evenly spaced chains across the tread. Also, studs are prohibited between May 1 and Sept. 30.

## Indiana

In addition to tire chains allowed when needed, Indiana also allows "tires in which have been inserted ice grips or tire studs, including retractable tire studs" from Oct. 1 to the following May 1. Just make sure those studs are no more than 3/32 of an inch beyond the tread of the traction surface and do not damage the road.

## Kentucky

The only item Kentucky is specific about the type of chains that are permitted. The exact language from the Kentucky statute: "Where chains are used on rubber-tired vehicles, the cross chains shall be not more than three-fourths (3/4) of an inch in thickness or diameter and shall be spaced not more than 10 inches apart, around the circumference of the tires."

## **Maine**

Vehicles cannot have tires with metal studs, wires, spikes or other metal protruding from the tire tread from May 1 through Oct. 1. Other than that time frame, there is nothing noted within the law regulating the use of tire chains, and that time frame can be extended if needed.

## **Maryland**

Maryland states that if a snow emergency is declared the following apply: Snow emergencies can be declared for individual roads or statewide. Travel is prohibited on any highway that is designated and appropriately marked by signs as a vehicle emergency route when a snow emergency is in effect unless the vehicle is equipped with chains or snow tires on at least one wheel at each end of a driving axle. "From Nov. 1 through March 31, owners of vehicles registered in Allegany County, Carroll County, Frederick County, Garrett County or Washington County are exempt from the prohibition of the use of tires ... (with) any block, stud, flange, cleat or spike or any other protuberance of any material, other than rubber, that projects beyond the tread of the traction surface of the tire."

## **Massachusetts**

Studded tires are permissible in Massachusetts between November 1 and May 1.

## **Missouri**

"No person shall operate any motor vehicle upon any road or highway of this state between the first day of April and the first day of November while the motor vehicle is equipped with tires containing metal or carbide studs." The law suggests a time frame, but weather is typically fine April through November anyway.

## **Montana**

The chain law goes into effect when roadside signs tell all drivers to chain up. The state's requirement when the law is in effect is for all "driver wheels" to be chained up. The use of pneumatic tires that feature an embedded block, stud, flange, cleat, spike or other protuberance that is retractable is permitted only between Oct. 1 and May 31 except that one of those tires may be used for a spare in case of tire failure. Violations will result in a \$25 fine. In summary: Tire chains of reasonable proportions are allowable, studded tires authorized October 1 – May 3, local authorities in their respective jurisdictions may issue special permits and finally chain law overrules studded tires. Difficult passes in Montana include Lookout and Pipestone on I-90, LoLo on US 93, and Monida on I-15

## **Nevada**

1. Studded tires authorized October 1 – April 30.
2. NRS 484.643 requires chains or snow tires when posted.
3. NRS 484.6432 require vehicles > 10,000 lbs. to chain when posted.
4. Vehicles over 10,000 lbs. are permitted in chain control areas if equipped with Mechanical Traction Devices (MTD) on drive axles.
5. Trailers must be chained.
6. Minimum tread depth on Mud and Snow tires is 3/16".
7. All vehicles towing trailers must have chains on the drive tires.
8. Trailers with brakes must be chained on one axle.
9. Front wheel drive must have chains on the front axle.
10. On any semi-trailer only one set of chains is required.
11. Tags and converter dollies not required to be chained.

Difficult passes in Nevada include Conway Summit on US 395 at the California border, and Immigrant Pass on I-80 near Battle Mountain.

### **New Hampshire**

Nothing in the state statutes addresses snow tires or tire chains specifically. However, the New Hampshire driver's manual found on the official New Hampshire website recommends tire chains in slippery conditions.

### **New Jersey**

The state allows chains of reasonable proportions when roads, streets and highways are slippery, because of rain, snow, ice, oil, manner of construction, or other reason. However, no chains shall be used at any time on improved highways when highway conditions do not make such use necessary for the "safety of life or property."

### **New Mexico**

New Mexico states that tire chains of reasonable proportions can be used when local authorities in their respective jurisdictions may issue special permits. Also, studded tires are authorized. Difficult passes in New Mexico include Raton and Lalabahada Hill on I-25 and Tijeras Canyon on I-40

### **New York**

The use of tire chains of reasonable proportions when required for safety because of snow, ice, or other slippery conditions.

### **North Carolina**

According to said regulations is state that tire chains are permissible to use when required for safety because of snow, ice or other conditions tending to cause a vehicle to slide or skid. Also, it shall be permissible to use upon any vehicle for increased safety, regular and snow tires with studs which project beyond the tread of the traction surface of the tire not more than one sixteenth of an inch (1/16) when compressed." The use of tire chains of reasonable proportions when required for safety because of snow, ice, or other slippery conditions.

### **North Dakota**

It is permissible to use tire chains of reasonable proportions. It is also permissible to use, from October fifteenth to April fifteenth, pneumatic tires which have metal studs which do not project more than one-sixteenth of an inch [1.59 millimeters] beyond the tread of the traction surface of the tire, except that it is permissible to use such tires on school buses at any time during the year. Every trailer or semitrailer when operated upon a highway at a speed in excess of twenty-five miles [40.23 kilometers] per hour must be equipped with safety chains or brakes adequate to control the movement of and to stop and to hold such vehicle and so designed as to be applied by the driver of the towing motor vehicle from its cab, and said brakes must be so designed and connected that in case of an accidental breakaway of the towed vehicle the brakes are automatically applied that it is permissible to use tire chains of reasonable proportions.

### **Ohio**

Tire chains can be when necessary from November 1<sup>st</sup> through April 15<sup>th</sup>. Also A "studded tire" means any tire designed for use on a vehicle and equipped with metal studs or studs of wear-resisting material that project beyond the tread of the traction surface of the tire. Use of Tire Chains during the period extending from the first day of November of each year through the fifteenth day of April of the succeeding year. A person may operate a motor vehicle that is equipped with retractable studded tires with the studs retracted at any time of the year, but shall operate the motor vehicle with the studs Also, this does not apply to the use of tire chains when there is snow or ice on the streets or highways where such chains are being used, or the immediate vicinity thereof.

### **Oklahoma**

The use of tire chains of reasonable proportions when required for safety because of snow, ice, or other slippery conditions.

### **Oregon**

Oregon states that studded tires authorized November 1 – April 1, also that chain law applies to all roadways, signage dictates requirements and drivers who disregard signage are subject to fines. Difficult passes in Oregon include Siskiyou on I-5, Cabbage on I-84, and Mt. Hood on US 26.

### **Pennsylvania**

Tire chains may be temporarily used on vehicles during periods of snow and ice emergency if they are in conformance with regulations promulgated by the department.

### **Rhode Island**

It shall be permissible to use tires with flat-headed studs projecting one-sixteenth inch (1/16") or less beyond the tread of the traction surface from the 15<sup>th</sup> of November to the 1<sup>st</sup> of April. It shall be permissible to use tire chains of reasonable proportions upon any vehicle when required for safety because of snow, ice, or other conditions tending to cause a vehicle to skid.

### **South Carolina**

Permissible upon any vehicle when require for safety because of snow, ice, or other conditions tending to cause a vehicle to skid. The use of tire chains of reasonable proportions when required for safety because of snow, ice, or other slippery conditions.

### **South Dakota**

The use of tire chains of reasonable proportions when required for safety because of snow, ice, or other slippery conditions. The South Dakota DOT has the authority to restrict travel on roads. Signs will alert you to these restrictions. Violating the restrictions could land you with a Class 2 misdemeanor conviction. Tire chains or "sufficient traction devices" are allowed. You don't have to wait for the signs to tell you to put on your chains. Chains also are permitted if conditions tending to cause a skid are present.

### **Tennessee**

A person may operate on a highway a vehicle equipped with a tire that has imbedded in it wire or other material for improving traction on snow and ice during the period of October 1 through April 15 of each year. Such a tire shall be so constructed that the percentage of wire or other material in contact with the roadway does not exceed, after the first one thousand (1,000) miles of use or operation, five percent (5%) of the total tire area in contact with the roadway. During the first one thousand (1,000) miles of use or operation of any such tire, the wire or other material in contact with the roadway shall not exceed twenty percent (20%) of the total tire area in contact with the roadway

### **Texas**

The use of tire chains of reasonable proportions when required for safety because of snow, ice, or other slippery conditions.

### **Utah**

Utah states that tire chains are allowed where posted, also that the chains should have minimum traction and finally studded tires are authorized October 15 – April 15. Difficult passes in Utah include Daniels on US 40, Soldiers Summit on Hwy 6, and Parlyes Canyon on I-80.

### **Washington**

Washington states that all vehicles over 10,000 GVW shall carry two (2) extra chains. Also, plastic cross links not allowed, CMV must carry chains from November 1 to April 1, cable chains are

allowed, and finally studded tires are authorized November 1 – March 31. Difficult passes in Washington include Blewett Pass on SR 97, Chinook Pass on SR 410, Cle Elum to Teanaway on SR 970, Gibbons Creek to Intersection of Cliffs Rd. on SR 14, Mt. Baker Highway on SR 542, Newhalem to Winthrop on SR 20, North Cascade Hwy on Hwy 20, Omak to Nespelam on SR 155, Satus Pass on SR 97, Snoqualmie Pass on I-90, Stevens Pass on SR 2, and White Pass on SR 12.

## Vermont

Vermont states Commercial Motor Vehicles grossing over 26000 pounds, are required to have and use chains, also must follow guidelines for what tires are to be chained especially between Route 9 from Bennington & Wilmington and finally during periods with issues, signs will be activated to show the need of using.

## Virginia

It shall be permissible to use tire chains of reasonable proportions when required for safety because of snow, ice, or other conditions tending to cause a vehicle to slide or skid. It shall also be permissible to use on any vehicle whose gross weight does not exceed 10,000 pounds tires with studs which project no more than one-sixteenth of an inch beyond the tread of the traction surface of the tire when compressed if the studs cover no more than three percent of the traction surface of the tire. Also note, the use of studded tires shall be permissible only from October 15 to April 15.

## Washington

Chains must be carried Nov. 1 through April 1. It takes five chains to comply with the requirement. However, all vehicles of more than 10,000 pounds gross vehicle weight must carry two extra chains if road conditions require the use of more chains or if chains in use are broken or otherwise useless. Chains must have two sides attached with cross-sections. Cables can be permitted. Plastic chains are prohibited. **Placement** On a dual-axle tractor, the outside tires on both axles will need to be chained in addition to one tire on either side of either trailer axle. Tractors equipped with wide-base singles will have to chain each tire on each drive axle. **Route specific:** On the following routes all vehicles and combinations of vehicles of more than 10,000 pounds shall carry enough tire chains from Nov. 1 to April 1 to meet the requirements: I-90 between North Bend (mile marker 32) and Ellensburg (mile marker 101); SNOQUALMIE PASS, I-82 between Ellensburg Exit 3 (mile marker 3) and Selah Exit 26 (mile marker 26); SR 97 between mile marker 145 and the junction with SR 2; BLEWETT PASS SR 2 between Dryden (mile marker 108) and Index (mile marker 36); STEVEN PASS, SR 12 between Packwood (mile marker 135) and Naches (mile marker 187); WHITE PASS, SR 97 between the Columbia River (mile marker 0) and Toppenish (mile marker 59); SATUS PASS, SR 410 from Enumclaw to Naches; CHINOOK PASS, SR 20 between Tonasket (mile marker 262) and Kettle Falls (mile marker 342); SHERMAN PASS, SR 155 between Omak (mile marker 79) and Nespelam (mile marker 45); (OMAK to NESPELEM), SR 970 between mile marker 0 and mile marker 10; (CLE ELUM TO TEANAWAY), SR 14 between Gibbons Creek (mile marker 18) and intersection of Cliffs Road (mile marker 108.40); GIBBONS CREEK – INTERSECTION OF CLIFF ROAD SR-542 Mount Baker Highway between mile marker 22.91 and mile marker 57.26. (ELLENSBURG to SELAH)

## West Virginia

Note that it shall be permissible to use tire chains of reasonable proportions upon any vehicle when required for safety because of snow, ice or other conditions tending to cause a vehicle to skid, and it shall be permissible to use studded tires during the period from November first of each year until April fifteenth of the following year: *Provided*, That in the interest of highway maintenance, no vehicle moved on a highway, other than school buses, shall be equipped with studded tires which are operational with a recommended air pressure greater than forty pounds per square inch.

## Wisconsin

Please note that Tire chains of reasonable proportions may be used on any vehicle when required for safety because of snow, ice or other conditions tending to cause a vehicle to skid. The use of tire

chains of reasonable proportions when required for safety because of snow, ice, or other slippery conditions.

## Wyoming

When the chain law is in effect due to snow, ice, or other conditions, travel on a highway may be restricted to use only by motor vehicles utilizing adequate snow tires or tire chains. There are two levels.

Level 1: When conditions are hazardous, travel can be restricted to vehicles equipped with tire chains, vehicles with adequate snow tires, or all-wheel-drive vehicles.

Level 2: When conditions are extremely hazardous, travel can be restricted to vehicles equipped with tire chains or all-wheel-drive vehicles equipped with adequate mud and snow or all-weather-rated tires.

Wyoming States that studded tires are legal all year, tire chains of reasonable proportions, local authorities in their respective jurisdictions may issue special permits. Also, travel on highways may be restricted to all wheel drive or chain equipped vehicles/snow tires. minimum tread depth is 4/32 steer; 2/32 other position.

Difficult passes in Wyoming include Elk Mountain on I-80, between Rock Springs and Evanston on I-80, and South Pass near Jackson on US 191.