



Winter Tire Chain Information 2014/2015

All attempts have been made to ensure this information is accurate, however, if there are any questions, contact the particular provinces or states directly. The individual provincial and state websites can also be checked for the specific details to their regulations.

CANADA

There is only a requirement for tire chains in British Columbia. The balance of the provinces and territories do not have requirements to use tire chains.

British Columbia

Drivers must obey Winter Tire and Chain signs throughout the province from October 1 to March 31. Commercial vehicles 27,000 KG GVW and greater, such as tractor trailers, are required to carry chains on most major highways.

Vehicles 5,500 kg to 27,000 kg GVW may use M+S or mountain/snowflake tires in lieu of chains, if available.

Winter Tire and Chain-Up Routes can be found at <http://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/topic.page?id=45404ACEC6B943F1B260D73072105E20>

Drivers not certain of the requirements can contact Commercial Vehicle Safety and Enforcement (CVSE) at <http://www.cvse.ca/outofprovince.html>

A guide to tire chain placement:
http://www.th.gov.bc.ca/SeasonalDriving/winter/documents/Brochure_CV-030_chainup_suggestions.pdf

UNITED STATES

Arizona

Tire chains of reasonable proportions on a vehicle when required for safety because of snow, ice or other conditions tending to cause a vehicle to skid.

To see the Arizona regulation, click [here](#).

Arkansas

Arkansas states, *"It shall be permissible to use tire chains of reasonable proportions upon any vehicle when required for safety"*

To see the regulation, click [here](#) and go to section 27-37-401 (c) (2)

California

California does not require trucks to carry chains during any specified time period. When the bad weather hits, though, it requires at least eight chains for a standard tractor-trailer configuration to comply with the regulations.

Chains or cables?

Conventional tire chains and cable chains, as well as other less conventional devices such as "Spikes Spiders," 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 permits 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

On the tractor, four chains must be on all four tires of the main drive axle. Two more chains are required on the outside tires of the second drive axle. Drivers have options on the placement of the two more required chains on the trailer axles. Chains can be placed on the

outside of either axle or staggered with one chain on the outside of each axle. No chains are required on the steering axles.

Remember, while inside tires of duals are not usually required to be chained, CalTrans can require chains on the inside duals if conditions are bad enough.

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, NV; and
- U.S. Highway 50 over Echo Summit between Lake Tahoe and Sacramento.

Chains are also sometimes required on:

- 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.

However, snow can fall unseasonably at higher elevations at many locations within California. Chains may be required at any time at these higher elevations when conditions warrant.

Click [here](#) for more info on California's trucking specific chain regulations.

Colorado

Colorado's chain law applies to every state highway, federal highway and interstate throughout the state. The chain law is in effect when drivers are notified by roadside signs. You can also call 511. Truckers will need chains for the four tires of the drive axle to be in compliance when it's time to throw iron. There is no requirement to carry extra chains or cables.

Commercial trucks traveling specifically on I-70 between mile marker 133 in Dotsero County and mile marker 259 in Morrison County must carry sufficient chains to be in compliance from September 1 through May 31. The state provides 21 chain-up locations along the I-70 corridor. Trucks without chains on this stretch of road will be fined \$50 plus a \$17 surcharge.

Violators to Colorado's chain law may be fined \$500, plus a \$79 surcharge, for not putting on chains when required. Violators that block the roadway because chains were not on when the law was in effect can be assessed with a \$1,000 fine, plus a \$157 surcharge.

There are two levels of the chain law:

- Level 1 – 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 – 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.

Chains or cables?

Drivers have a lot of options in Colorado. The following are the approved devices, along with any design specifications and/or any restrictions on the use of the devices:

- Metal chains must consist of two circular metal loops, one on each side of the tire, connected by at least nine evenly spaced loops across the tread. Dual tire chains are acceptable.
- Wheel sanders must carry enough sand to get the vehicle through the restricted area;
- Automatic chains that spin under the drive wheels automatically as traction is lost;
- Textile traction device, a fabric boot which encompasses the tire. Currently, the only textile device that has been approved for use on Colorado highways is the AutoSock.
- Cables are allowed in only two instances: if they are made with steel cross member rollers of 0.415 inches or greater in diameter (and even those can't be used on single drive axle tractors) or they can be used on tires where chains are not already required.

The Colorado regulations actually give the Colorado Department of Transportation and the Highway Patrol the power to dictate when chain laws go into effect. The regulations only address design and placement.

The law is [**C.R.S. 42-4-106.**](#)

Connecticut

Cables and chains are permitted only from November 15 through April 30. The regulations do not outline the minimum number of chains required.

Click [here](#) for Connecticut's regulations.

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.”

State officials can restrict travel on highways during emergency situations. Officials have three different levels of bans to choose from. A Level I ban encourages extreme caution when traveling roadways and advises that non-essential travel be avoided. A Level II ban permits travel only by emergency vehicles, essential government personnel, health care providers and vehicles carrying food and fuel. A 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.

Click [here](#) to read Delaware’s original regulation and [here](#) for the travel restriction regulation.

Georgia

As with most states that rarely encounter snow and ice, 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 due to inclement weather. In the event this occurs, posted signage will be used to communicate to drivers that tire chains are required to proceed.

In light of last winter’s unusual freezing temperatures, the GDOT amended their codes related to tire chains. These laws went into effect July 1, 2014. For commercial vehicles with four or more drive wheels, tire chains must be installed on each of the outermost drive wheel tires. Previously, any four driver wheel tires required chains.

“Tire chains” is defined as “metal chains which 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.” Before July 1, any traction devices that were capable of providing equal traction were accepted.

Furthermore, any driver who causes an accident 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.

Click [here](#) for the regulation.

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 travellers 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.

On a side note, studs are prohibited between May 1 and September 30.

To read the regulation, click [here](#).

Illinois

Illinois' regulations expressly keep officials from prohibiting the use of tire chains of reasonable proportion on any vehicle when required for safety.

Click [here](#) to read the regulation.

Indiana

Indiana is another state that permits the use of chains and cables when needed for safety because of snow and ice.

Read the regulation [here](#).

Iowa

Iowa allows chains and cables for safety in snow and ice.

Click [here](#) for the regulation.

Kansas

Kansas is another state that allows tire chains "of reasonable proportions on any vehicle when required for safety because of snow, ice or other conditions tending to cause a vehicle to skid."

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Read the regulation [here](#).

Kentucky

There are no specific dates for the use of tire chains or how many must be used. However, the state is painstakingly specific about the type of chains that are permitted.

The exact language from the Kentucky statute states, "*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.*"

Click [here](#) for the full regulation.

Louisiana

It is permissible in Louisiana to use tire chains for to prevent a vehicle to slide or skid.

Click [here](#) for the regulation.

Maine

Vehicles cannot have tires with metal studs, wires, spikes or other metal protruding from the tire tread from May 1 through October 1. Other than that timeframe, there is nothing noted within the law regulating the use of tire chains.

Click [here](#) for regulation details.

Maryland

The Maryland regulations can be a bit misleading. In one section of the regulations, the state has the boilerplate language permitting the use of snow chains if needed.

However, elsewhere in the regulations it is stated that chains may be required in Maryland if a snow emergency is declared. Snow emergencies can be declared for individual roads or statewide.

Travel – other than for motorcycles – is prohibited on any highway that is designated and appropriately signposted as a vehicle emergency route when a snow emergency is in effect,

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unless the vehicle is equipped with chains or snow tires on at least one wheel at each end of a driving axle.

To read the regulation mandating the use of chains, click [here](#).

Massachusetts

Massachusetts prohibits the use of studded tires and chains between May 1 and November 1 without a permit. The law does not specifically mention chains; however, the Massachusetts State Patrol confirmed the regulation applies the same way to chains. It should also be noted that commercial vehicles can be ordered off the roadways during “snow emergencies.”

Click [here](#) to read the regulation.

Michigan

Chains, of “reasonable proportion,” can be used because of snow, ice or other conditions that tend to cause a vehicle to skid. However, regulatory guidance provided by the state says that if chains are used, “the chain must not come in contact with the road.

To read the regulation, click [here](#). The guidance can be read [here](#).

Minnesota

Minnesota is another state that allows chains when conditions require their use for safety.

Click [here](#) to read the regulation.

Mississippi

Mississippi is another state that allows chains of reasonable proportions when needed.

Click [here](#) to read the regulation.

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.

To read the full Montana regulation, click [here](#).

Nebraska

Nebraska regulations state, "It shall be permissible to use tire chains of reasonable proportions upon any vehicle when required for safety because of snow, ice, or other condition tending to cause a vehicle to slide or skid."

Click [here](#) to read the regulation.

Nevada

There are no specific dates for chain laws to be in effect. Roadside signs will let drivers know when chaining up is required. In Nevada, truckers will need to chain at least two wheels on the main drive axle. They are also required to chain the "braking wheels of any trailing vehicle in a combination of vehicles."

Click [here](#) for the full regulation.

New Jersey

New Jersey goes a little beyond the standard "chains are permitted when needed" directive. 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." Also, New Jersey prohibits the use of chains "likely to be thrown so as to endanger any person or property."

Click [here](#) for the New Jersey Regulation.

New Mexico

New Mexico allows the use of chains when needed for safety and uses the common regulatory language used by numerous other states. It does not mandate size of chains, placement or anything more specific.

To read the full regulation, click [here](#).

New York

If New York officials, either state or local, post a route as a snow emergency route, all vehicles traveling on it will be required to have snow tires and/or chains. There are no specifics mandating the number of chains or placement.

Click [here](#) for the regulation.

North Carolina

North Carolina allows the use of snow chains when necessary but does not outline a required number of chains or placement.

To read the regulation, click [here](#).

North Dakota

There's very little in the way of legal restrictions on chains in North Dakota. The regulation just states that chains of reasonable proportions are permissible.

Click [here](#) for the regulation.

Ohio

Ohio has strict prohibitions on studded tires, but excludes chains. The regulation states, "This section 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."

To read the full Ohio regulation, click [here](#).

Oklahoma

Oklahoma is yet another state that will permit drivers to use tire chains as they see necessary for safety. There's nothing mandating the number or placement of chains.

Click [here](#) to read the regulation.

Oregon

Oregon's law applies to all highways in the state. Signs will tell drivers when they are

required to carry chains and when they are required to use them. They will need to have six chains on hand to comply in Oregon.

Placement

Again, there are a few options for which tires drivers are required to chain on the tractor, including:

- A tandem-drive axle tractor must have chains on two tires on each side of the primary drive axle (in other words, all four tires of the main axle); or
- If both axles are powered, one tire on each side of each drive axle (again, four chains total required; drivers just don't have to chain the inside tires).

On the trailer:

- Chains must also be placed on two tires, one on each side, of any axle on the trailer. The chains can be both on the front axle, both on the rear axle or staggered with one outside tire on the front and the outside tire of the opposite rear axle.

To read the Oregon chain laws, click [here](#).

Pennsylvania

If officials declare a snow emergency route when the roadway is covered with ice or snow, only vehicles with snow tires or "tire chains on two tires on a driven axle" may proceed.

To read the regulation, click [here](#).

Rhode Island

Add another state to the list that simply permits the use of chains, without mandating how many or the placement of the chains.

Click [here](#) to read the full regulation.

South Carolina

South Carolina gives permission to use chains when required for safety, because of snow, ice or other conditions tending to cause a vehicle to skid.

Click [here](#) for the regulation.

South Dakota

The South Dakota DOT has the authority to restrict travel on roads. Signs will alert drivers to these restrictions. Tire chains or “sufficient traction devices” are allowed. Drivers don’t have to wait for the signs to tell them to put on their chains. Chains are also permitted if conditions tending to cause a skid are present.

Click [here](#) and [here](#) to read the relevant regulations.

Tennessee

Tennessee sends mixed signals with its regulations. In one regulation, it says that it is “permissible” to use snow chains when conditions warrant. However, elsewhere, the regulations requires that every truck “likely to encounter” conditions carry at least one set of chains.

So to be safe, drivers might want to have a couple of chains on board and ready to go.

To read the regulations, click [here](#).

Texas

Even Texas can get snow, although it seems more common for the state to get hit with ice storms. The state permits the use of snow chains.

Click [here](#) for the state statute.

Utah

The Utah DOT has the authority to restrict highway travel between October 1 and April 30 to vehicles either running chains or at least having them in your possession. Drivers will need to install four or more chains on the “drive wheels.”

Click [here](#) to read the regulation.

Vermont

Vermont has a “traffic committee” that will decide if use of chains will be required. The regulation mandates that the “advance notice shall be given to the traveling public through

signage and, whenever possible, through public service announcements.” This language also mandates that adequate space be provided to chain up.

The regulation does not outline the required number or placement of chains.

Click [here](#) to read the regulation.

Washington

Chains must be carried November 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 in the event that road conditions require the use of more chains or if chains in use are broken or otherwise useless.

Chains or cables?

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 sufficient 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)
- I-82 between Ellensburg Exit 3 (mile marker 3.00) and Selah Exit 26 (mile marker 26.00)
- SR 97 between mile marker 145 and Junction
- SR 2 between Dryden (mile marker 108) and Index (mile marker 36)
- SR 12 between Packwood (mile marker 135) and Naches (mile marker 187)
- SR 97 between junction SR-14 (mile marker 4) Columbia River and Toppenish (mile marker 59)
- SR 410 from Enumclaw to Naches
- SR 20 between Tonasket (mile marker 262) and Kettle Falls (mile marker 342)

- SR 155 between Omak (mile marker 79) and Nespelem (mile marker 45)
- SR 970 between mile marker 0 and mile marker 10
- SR 14 (mile marker 18) to Junction 97 (mile marker 102)
- SR-542 Mt. Baker Highway between mile marker 22.91 and mile marker 57.26

While much of the chain requirements are the responsibility of the Washington State Patrol, the regulations still outline most of the basics.

To read the regulations, click [here](#). A better reference is a guide provided by Washington State Patrol (WSP), found [here](#).

West Virginia

West Virginia is another state that permits the use tire chains of reasonable proportions on any vehicle when required for safety because of snow, ice or other conditions tending to cause a vehicle to skid.

The regulation can be found [here](#).

Wisconsin

Wisconsin regulations permit the use of chains but do not mandate the number or placement.

Click [here](#) for Wisconsin's regulation.

Wyoming

When Wyoming officials enact the chain law, commercial vehicles must have chains on at least the two outside tires of one drive axle. Signs will give notify drivers when the chain law is in effect.

Non-compliance can cost a minimum of \$250. But if driver blocks the highway because he/she didn't have chains on, a \$750 fine can be levied.

Click [here](#) for the regulation.