

TRAFFIC ADVISORY

Date: December 11, 2012
Dist. 7: Los Angeles and Ventura Counties
Contact: (213) 897-3656
Online: www.dot.ca.gov/dist07
caltransd7info.blogspot.com
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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

WINTER DRIVING TIPS

Los Angeles — Winter weather can be alarming and hazardous for drivers. The best defense is to stay off the roads in stormy weather, but if you must drive, use caution, common sense, and be prepared. Mountain areas and highways in higher elevations (such as I-5 in north Los Angeles County, SR-39 and SR-2, below left) may bring snow, ice, and blizzard-like conditions. The winter driving tips below might save your life.



- Use the Caltrans Quickmap (quickmap.dot.ca.gov) to check road conditions, road work, chain control, cameras, and CHP information before you leave. You can also call 511 or visit go511.com.
- Fill up your gas tank before you leave.
- Drive as conditions permit — slower acceleration, slower speeds, and slower braking in winter weather. Leave extra room between you and the vehicle in front of you.
- Use headlights (not just parking or fog lights) in foggy, rainy and snowy weather. You MUST have your lights on when using your wipers — it's the law.
- If you get stuck, stay with your vehicle and wait for help.
- If visibility diminishes to the point that you no longer feel safe driving, don't stop in traffic lanes.
- Bring water, food, warm clothing, sturdy shoes/boots and medications.
- Bring a charged cell phone and your cell phone charger for your vehicle. Bring a flashlight or battery-operated radio just in case.
- Make sure your tires are in good condition and your vehicle is running well. Check your coolant, brakes, windshield wipers, defroster/heater and exhaust systems. Winterize your vehicle before a trip to the mountains or across the desert.

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- All vehicles, including those with four-wheel drive or snow tires, should carry correctly sized chains when traveling during snowy weather. If traveling to mountain areas, carry chains between October and April, even if it's not snowing. Weather can be unpredictable. Highway signs will indicate whether chains are required. If you don't have chains, you may not be allowed to proceed and risk being cited or fined.
- If chains are required on a roadway, you may install your own chains or use the chain control areas or turnouts close to chain control locations. NEVER block the roadway or put chains on next to the road or shoulder.

CHAIN CONTROL REQUIREMENT LEVELS

R-1: Chains or snow tread tires required. Snow tires must have a tread depth of 6/32" with a "M & S" imprint on the tire's sidewall.

R-2: Chains required on all vehicles except four-wheel or all-wheel drives with snow tread tires on all four wheels. Four wheel drives must carry chains. If you have four-wheel drive, engage it. Use the "4-high" range only. Use "4-low" only if your vehicle becomes stuck.

R-3: Chains required — ALL VEHICLES, no exceptions.

- Use the Caltrans permitted chain installers at the turnout locations. They will have a yellow bib with an official Caltrans Encroachment Permit. Do not allow non-permitted chain installers to put chains on your vehicle — for your safety and others.
- Never play in the snow next to or on the roadway. Don't allow sleds to slide onto the road. Don't play in the snow on private property.
- Don't light fires or barbeques along the highways or in turnouts.
- Always park in a safe location or turnout. Watch for "no parking" signs. You don't want to get a ticket, get towed, or have an unfortunate accident.
- Black ice can be nearly invisible, so reduce your speeds during and after it snows, especially in turns or shady areas.
- Make room for Caltrans equipment, CHP vehicles, and all emergency responders. Stay clear of plows!
- Don't trash California — take your trash with you.
- Slow down, bring patience, and be courteous. Use turnouts if you're holding up traffic.
- Never drink and drive or text and drive.

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- What to do if you encounter fog:
 - o Reduce your speed to allow for safe stopping distance.
 - o Drive with headlights on low beam. Never drive with just parking or fog lights.
 - o Use extreme caution when crossing traffic or busy intersections.
 - o Lower your window and listen for traffic you can't see.
 - o Use windshield wipers and the defroster to improve visibility.
 - o Don't pass lines of traffic.
 - o If visibility diminishes to the point that you no longer feel safe driving, don't stop in the traffic lanes. Try to use the closest off-ramp and wait for the fog to clear.

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