



California Department of Transportation • California Highway Patrol

---

## NEWS RELEASE

09-118

**Date:** Thursday, November 19, 2009

**Contact/Caltrans:** Phil Frisbie, Jr.  
**Phone:** (707) 441-4678

**Contact/CHP:** Erik Van Emmerik  
**Phone:** (707) 923-2155

### FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

#### PREPARING FOR WINTER TRAVEL

**Eureka** – Caltrans and CHP want to remind motorists to prepare for winter weather, especially when traveling to areas which may experience snow and ice. Make sure your vehicle is in good working condition. In particular, check the antifreeze, tire pressure and tread, brakes, windshield wipers, heater, defroster, and exhaust system.

When traveling to snow country, motorists should carry tire chains that are the proper type and size, and are in good condition. Chains must be installed on the drive wheels, so make sure you know if your vehicle is front or rear wheel drive. Other useful items to take are a flashlight, chain repair links, ice scraper or spray deicer, and a shovel. Taking along water, food, warm blankets, and extra clothing will make you more comfortable if you experience a lengthy delay. And before you leave, put an extra door key in your pocket; a number of motorists have locked themselves out of their cars when putting on chains. "A prepared motorist is a safer motorist to themselves, other travelers, and our highway workers," said Charlie Fielder, Caltrans District 1 Director.

In addition to being prepared, motorists should use caution as well as common sense. Don't be rushed; get an early start to allow more time to reach your destination safely. Let someone know your travel plans, the route you plan to take and when you expect to arrive, and update them if things change. Keep your fuel tank full in case it's necessary to change routes or you get caught in a traffic delay. And above all, be more observant

and slow down. A highway speed of 55 or 65 miles an hour may be safe in dry weather, but is an invitation for trouble on snow or ice. Snow and ice make stopping distances much longer, so leave more distance between your vehicle and the vehicle ahead. Bridge decks and shady spots can be icy when other areas are not. Remember to avoid sudden stops and quick direction changes. "Many collisions are caused by driving too fast for current conditions, especially during winter storms," said Adam Jäger, California Highway Patrol Garberville Area Lieutenant Commander.

Before traveling and during your trip, be sure to check current road conditions. Call the California Highway Information Network at 1-800-427-7623, or go online to [www.dot.ca.gov](http://www.dot.ca.gov).

###