



DECEMBER 9, 2002

Caltrans News Release

California Department of Transportation
District 3, Marysville
Jody Lonergan, District Director

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To: Assignment Editors

Subject: Filing Snow Stories along Interstate 80 and U.S.
Highway 50

Greetings!

To serve you better, we have put together some basic information about Caltrans snow removal operations along both of Northern California's major interstate corridors through the Sierra.

Please consider this your guide on where to go and how to arrange an interview when it comes to snow removal operations along Interstate 80 and U.S. Highway 50. During any major storm, all our resources are committed to keeping these vital corridors open to the traveling public and our staff is not always available to stop and talk to the media. However, if you can take the time to make prior arrangements or arrive at designated locations, we can try to accommodate your needs.

We hope you find this information helpful when it comes time for filing all your stories during major snowstorms.

Sincerely,

Mark Dinger
Public Information Officer
Caltrans District 3
Office phone - (530) 741-4572 (regular office hours are Mon. - Fri., 7:30 a.m. to 5 p.m.)
Pager - (530) 821-8515 (nights and weekends during major snow storms)



CONTACTS FOR THE I-80 CORRIDOR

For interviews, please contact the Kingvale Dispatch Center at (530) 426-7616 or come by the Kingvale Maintenance Station located at 51121 Donner Pass Road. To get there, just exit I-80 at Kingvale and follow the signs to our maintenance facility. The Kingvale Communications Center is located near the fuel pumps. You can also phone this number for basic chain control and snowfall information on Interstate 80*. The public number for chain control information is 1-800-427-ROAD.

For ride-alongs with Caltrans staff during snow clearing operations, please contact Mark Dinger in advance at (530) 741-4572 during regular business hours.

The media is also welcome to sit back and enjoy a hot cup of coffee and a snack (just \$1) at our Kingvale Cafeteria. Meals are also served at a reasonable price (just \$4) and a public telephone is available.

CONTACTS FOR THE U.S. HIGHWAY 50 CORRIDOR

For interviews, please contact our South Lake Tahoe Maintenance Center at (530) 577-7878. You can also drop by this facility, which is located at 2243 Carnelian Drive in Meyers, just west of South Lake Tahoe. From Highway 50, head south on Highway 89, then make the first left onto Carnelian Drive. For basic chain control and snowfall information for U.S. Highway 50, please call (530) 587-7878*. The public number for chain control information is 1-800-427-ROAD.

For ride-alongs with Caltrans staff during snow clearing operations, please contact Mark Dinger in advance at (530) 741-4572 during regular business hours.

The media is also welcome to sit back and enjoy a hot cup of coffee and a snack (just \$1) at the South Lake Tahoe Cafeteria. Meals are also served at a reasonable price (just \$4) and a public telephone is available.

** The numbers provided above are not public numbers, so please don't publish. The public number is 1-800-427-ROAD (7623).*



DONNER PASS AREA SNOW OPERATIONS INFORMATION



The **Donner Pass Area** snow removal operation is responsible for clearing a 90-mile long section of Interstate 80, from Newcastle to the California/Nevada State Line.

There are approximately 45 permanent employees assigned to the Donner Pass Area. During major storms, this number swells to nearly 300 workers, which include temporary, intermittent, and borrowed employees from other Caltrans Districts.

The Donner Pass snow removal effort is based out of four Caltrans Maintenance Stations in Auburn, Whitmore, Kingvale, and Truckee.

- The **Auburn** Maintenance Station is situated along Highway 49 in historic Auburn at an elevation of 1400-ft. This station primarily plays a support role for all but the lowest snowstorms. Auburn has four plow/sanders, and a regular crew of 12 employees for I-80 between Newcastle and Gold Run.
- The **Whitmore** Maintenance Station is located near Blue Canyon at an elevation of nearly 5,000-ft. In addition to the maintenance station, there is a dormitory and kitchen for housing and feeding snow removal personnel. During the winter season at Whitmore, 5 motorgraders, 6 plow/sanders, 7 plow trucks, and 4 rotary plows are deployed on I-80 between Gold Run and the Yuba Gap. During major storms, there are 54 employees stationed at Whitmore.
- The **Kingvale** Maintenance Station is situated west of the Donner Summit at an elevation of 6,200-ft. It is the largest maintenance station in the area. With a 150-bed dormitory and a 24-hour kitchen. Kingvale is the home to the "Sierra Snowfighters". This maintenance stations also houses Kingvale University, where workers from all over the state are trained for snow removal. Kingvale is where the latest snow removal technology is tested and deployed. These technologies include snow and rotary plows that are equipped with radar collision-avoidance devices and guided by magnets imbedded in the pavement. 12 motorgraders, 9 plow/sanders, 5 plow trucks, 8 rotary plows, a fuel truck and a tow truck are deployed for snow removal operations on a 20 mile stretch of I-80 between the Yuba Gap and the Donner Lake Interchange, west of Truckee. During major storms, Kingvale employs more than 170 employees working 12-hour shifts. Caltrans employees from the San Joaquin and Sacramento Valleys and the Bay Area are also called up to work during major storms.

- The **Truckee East/West** Maintenance Station, situated at an elevation of 5800-ft., is responsible for snow removal on the “eastside” of the Donner Pass. 6 motorgraders, 7 plow/sanders, 3 rotary plows and 7 plow trucks are deployed along a 24-mile stretch of I-80 from the Donner Lake Interchange to the Nevada State Line. During major storms, there are 72 employees working 12-hour shifts.

The Kingvale Snow Communications Center (KSCC), located at the Kingvale Maintenance Station, coordinates all snow operations along the I-80 corridor. With a staff of 11 dispatchers and a dispatch supervisor, the KSCC coordinates all radio traffic in the mountain areas and controls the many Changeable Message Signs (CMS) and Highway Advisory Radios (HAR) that advise motorists of the latest conditions on I-80.

CHAIN CONTROLS:

- 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 sidewall)
- R-2** - Chains required on all vehicles except four-wheel (4WD) or all-wheel drive (AWD) vehicles with snow tread tires on all four wheels.
- R-3** - Chains required on all vehicles with no exceptions. This condition is rarely imposed.

THE SPEED LIMIT ON I-80 DURING CHAIN CONTROL IS 30 MPH.



SOUTH LAKE TAHOE AREA SNOW OPERATIONS INFORMATION



The **South Lake Tahoe Area** snow removal operation is responsible for clearing an 80 mile-long section of U.S. Highway 50 from the Sacramento/El Dorado county line to the California/Nevada state line in the City of South Lake Tahoe. There are approximately 35 permanent employees assigned to the South Lake Tahoe Area. During major storms this workforce swells to over 130 workers, which includes temporary, intermittent and borrowed employees from other Caltrans Districts.

The South Lake Tahoe snow removal operation is based out of three Caltrans Maintenance Stations in Placerville, Kyburz and South Lake Tahoe.

- The **Placerville** Maintenance Station is situated along U.S. Highway 50 in historic Placerville at an elevation of 2,000-ft. This station is responsible for low-elevation snow operations on a 40-mile stretch of U.S. Highway 50 from the El Dorado Hills to Riverton. Elevations in this area range from 1,000' to 4,000'. Equipment used at Placerville for snow removal and ice control includes two motor graders, two loaders, three plow trucks, Seven sanders and one chain control truck. During snow-storms there can be as many as 36 employees working 12-hour shifts.
- The **Kyburz** Maintenance Station is situated along U.S. Highway 50 at an elevation of 4,100-ft. This station is responsible for mid-elevation snow operations on a 20-mile stretch of U.S. Highway 50 from Riverton to Twin Bridges on the western slope of the Echo Summit. Elevations in this area range from 2,000 to 6,000-ft. Equipment used at Kyburz for snow removal and ice control includes two motor graders, two rotary plows, two loaders, two plow trucks, five sanders and two chain control campers. During major storms there can be as many as 40 employees working 12-hour shifts.
- The **South Lake Tahoe** Maintenance Station is situated near the junctions of State Highways 50 and 89 in Meyers, just west of South Lake Tahoe, at an elevation of 6,200-ft. This station is responsible for high-elevation snow operations on a 20-mile stretch of U.S. Highway 50 from Twin Bridges to the California/Nevada state line in South Lake Tahoe. Elevations range from 6,000 to 7,300-ft. Equipment used at South lake Tahoe for snow removal and ice control includes six motor graders, eight rotary plows, four loaders, three plow trucks, eight sanders, one brine truck and one chain control truck. There can be as many 60 employees working 12-hour shifts. South Lake Tahoe maintenance is also responsible for avalanche control on Highway 50 at the Echo Summit. The South Lake Tahoe maintenance station has a dormitory with 18 beds and a kitchen, which operates 16 hours a day.

The **Regional Transportation Management Center (TMC)**, located in Rancho Cordova , coordinates all snow operations along the Highway 50 Corridor. With a staff of five dispatchers and a dispatch leadperson, the TMC monitors all radio traffic in the mountain areas and coordinates with traffic technicians who control the many Changeable Message Signs (CMS) and Highway Advisory Radios (HAR) that advise motorists of the latest traffic conditions on Highway 50.

CHAIN CONTROLS:

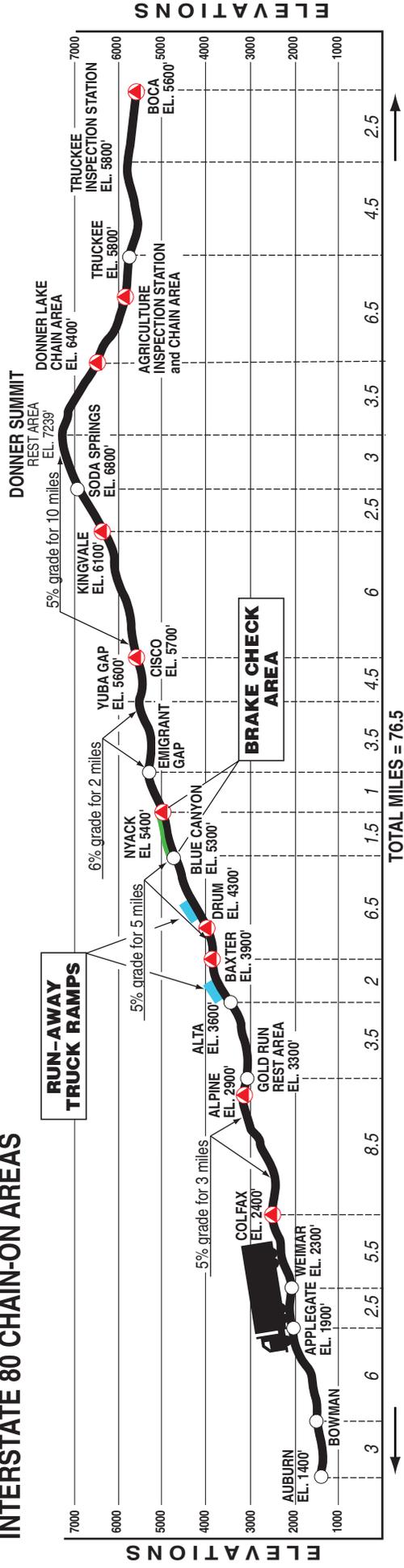
R-1 - Chains or snow tread tires required (snow tires must have a tread depth of 6/32 with a "M & S" imprint on the sidewall)

R-2 - Chains required on all vehicles except four-wheel (4WD) or all-wheel drive (AWD) vehicles with snow tread tires on all four wheels.

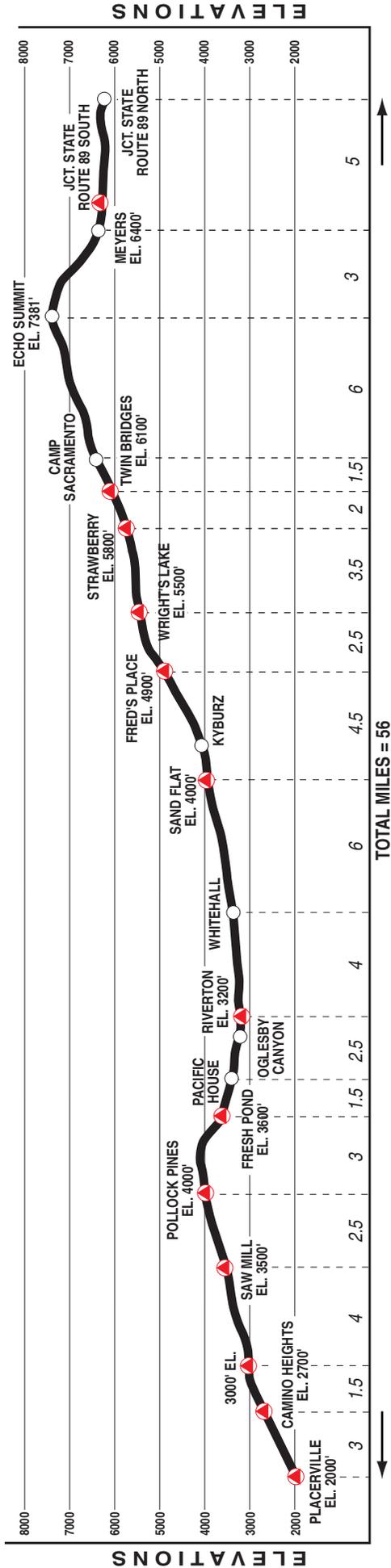
R-3 - Chains required on all vehicles with no exceptions. This condition is rarely imposed.

THE SPEED LIMIT ON HWY. 50 DURING CHAIN CONTROL IS 25 MPH.

INTERSTATE 80 CHAIN-ON AREAS



US ROUTE 50 CHAIN-ON AREAS



- LEGEND**
- TOWN/COMMUNITY
 - ▲ CHAIN-ON AREAS