

CHAIN UP TIPS

Guide to Colorado's chain law, which applies to all state, federal, and interstate highways in Colorado.

Definitions - Under the Colorado chain law, a commercial vehicle is defined as being used in commerce to transport passengers or property and fitting into one of the following categories:

● Has a gross combination weight rating of 26,001 or more lbs. inclusive of a towed unit which has a gross vehicle weight rating of more than 10,000 lbs.

or

● Has a gross vehicle weight rating of 26,001 or more lbs.

or

● Is designed to transport 16 or more passengers, including the driver.

Notification - When the chain law is in effect, drivers will be notified which vehicles must chain up and where by the following means: electronic message signs; 511 traveler information; www.cotrip.org; and media outlets.

Carrying Chains on I-70 (effective March 1, 2009) - Commercial vehicles operating on I-70 in either direction between mileposts 133 (Dotsero) and 259 (Morrison) from Sept. 1 to May 31 must carry sufficient chains at all times to be in compliance with the Colorado chain law.

Chaining Up - Metal chains must consist of two circular metal loops, one on each side of the tire, connected by not less than nine evenly-spaced chain loops across the tread. Commercial vehicles that have four or more drive wheels must chain four wheels. Dual tire chains are acceptable.

Alternate Traction Devices (ATDs) - Approved ATDs in Colorado are wheel sanders, which must carry enough sand to get the vehicle through the restricted area; pneumatically driven chains, which spin under the drive wheels automatically as traction is lost; and textile traction device (TTD), a fabric boot which encompasses the tire. Currently, the only TTD that has been approved for use on Colorado state highways is the *AutoStuck*.

Tire Cables - With only two exceptions, Colorado chain law rules do not permit tire cables as alternate traction devices. The exceptions are: 1) tire cables with high strength steel cross member rollers 0.415" or great in diameter, which can be used on all commercial vehicles except single drive axle combinations; and 2) on a tandem power drive axle commercial vehicle, where any type of cable can be used only if there are chains on the two outside tires of one of the power drive axles and cables on two or more tires of the other power drive axle.

Chain Law Level 1 - All single drive axle combination commercial vehicles must chain all four drive wheels; cables are not permitted as ATDs. All other commercial vehicles must have snow tires or chains. Level 1 may be implemented any time there is snow covering any part of the traveled portion of pavement on an ascending grade.

Chain Law Level 2 - All commercial vehicles must chain up. Single drive axle and tandem drive axle combination commercial vehicles must chain four drive wheels. Autotransports must comply to the extent possible without causing damage to hydraulic lines. Buses must chain two drive wheels to comply. Level 2 may be implemented any time there is snow covering the entire traveled portion of pavement on an ascending grade, or when driving conditions dictate that this level is necessary to protect safety and to minimize road closures.

I-70 Chain Up Stations - EB mileposts: 178, 183, 184 (shoulder), 187 (shoulder), 195, 203 (scenic area), 205, 219, 228, 241, 251, 289, 343. WB mileposts: 358, 263, 260, 254 (Buffalo Overlook), 228, 223, 221, 219, 213, 197, 179.

I-25 Chain Up Stations - NB milepost 157. SB milepost 172.

Violations - The fine for not carrying chains on I-70 between mileposts 133 and 259 from Sept. 1 to May 31 is \$50 plus a \$17 surcharge. Statewide, the fine for not chaining up when the chain law is in effect is \$500 plus a \$157 surcharge. The fine for not chaining up and subsequently blocking the highway is \$1,000 plus a \$313 surcharge.

Do trailers need to be chained up? No. Chains are not required on trailers.

Must hazardous material tankers and transporters comply with the chain law? Yes. Vehicles placarded for flammable, combustible, or explosive loads may pass the chain-up signs and install their chains where pavement is covered by snow or ice, at a safe location outside the traveled portion of the highway.

When can chains be removed? Call 511 for current chain law status. The chain law will cease where bare descending pavement is encountered, and when electronic signs cease to display 'chain law in effect' information.

Colorado Road Conditions
511 Traveler Information Line
www.cotrip.org



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