

# Winter Driving Tips For Visitors

## Stanislaus National Forest

ROG 16-91; 04/09



This handout was compiled from information provided by the California Department of Transportation.

### Before Driving In Snow Country

- Your vehicle brakes, wipers, defroster, heater and exhaust system should all be in good working order.
- Check to insure that your vehicle has anti-freeze protection down to 0 degrees Fahrenheit. You may wish to add a de-icer solvent to the windshield wiper solution to prevent freezing.
- Check to make sure that tires are properly inflated and that tread is in good condition.
- Carry chains for your vehicle. Make sure they are the proper size for the wheels of your vehicle. Bring, too, a flashlight and chain repair links. Chains must be installed on drive wheels. Know whether your vehicle is front- or rear-wheel drive.
- Take along an ice scraper, extra de-icing solution, a broom to brush snow from your vehicle, a shovel to dig your vehicle out should it become stuck, sand or burlap for wheel traction and, finally, an old towel to clean your hands.
- Take along spare water, food, clothing and blankets in the event you experience a lengthy delay in travel.
- Take an extra car key along. Some motorists have mistakenly locked their keys in the car when putting on chains or arriving at ski areas.

### Driving Tips

- Allow enough time for travel. It takes extra time to traverse the mountains in the winter, more so than in the summer months.
- Keep the gas tank full, in case you experience unforeseen route changes, adverse weather conditions or other delays.

- Keep windshield and windows clear. If necessary, stop at a turnout to use a snowbrush or scraper. Use a clean cloth and the car defroster to keep windows free of fog.
- Slow down. Normal summer driving speeds cannot be attained in the winter months without risk to the vehicle and passengers. Snow and ice increase stopping distances by a significant factor. Keep your seat belt buckled and leave more distance between your vehicle and the vehicle in front of you.
- Bridge decks and shady spots can be icy when other areas are not. Avoid sudden stops and quick direction changes.
- Be more observant. Bad weather often limits visibility. Slow down. Watch for other slow-moving equipment or vehicles with flashing lights.
- When your vehicle stalls, stay with it and try to conserve fuel while maintaining warmth. Be alert for possible problems with carbon monoxide or exhaust fumes.

### Cal Trans Chain Requirements

- **R1:** Chains are required—snow tread tires are allowed.
- **R2:** Chains are required on all vehicles except four-wheel drive vehicles with snow tires on all wheels.
- **R3:** Chains are required on all vehicles—no exceptions.

**R1** and **R2** are the most common conditions occurring. A highway will usually be closed before an **R3** condition is invoked.

### Cal Trans Chain Controls

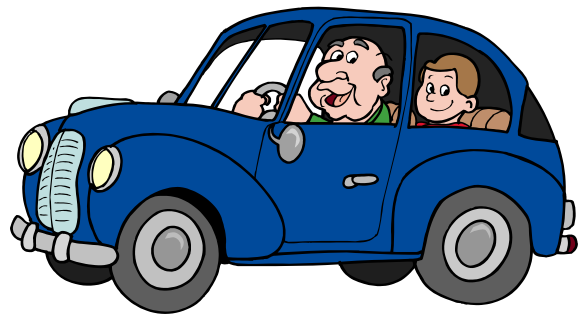
- You must stop and put on chains when highway signs indicate chains are required. You may be cited by the California Highway Patrol and fined for failure to do so. You will usually have a mile or so between the “Chains Required” signs and the checkpoint to

install your chains.

- Chain control areas may change rapidly from location to location due to road and weather conditions.
- The speed limit when chains are required is either 25 or 30 miles per hour and will be posted along the highway.
- Pull completely off the road to the right before installing chains on your vehicle. Stopping in a traffic lane will endanger you, your passengers and any vehicles following yours.
- When removing chains, drive beyond the signs reading "End of Chain Control" to a pull-off area where you can safely remove them.
- When using the services of a "chain installer", get a receipt and jot down the installer's badge number on it. Chain installers are independent business people, not CalTrans employees. Having the badge number may help with any misunderstandings later. Chain installers are NOT allowed to sell or rent chains.



**In the event of an emergency,  
dial 911  
for police, fire, or ambulance  
assistance.**



**For additional information, contact:**

**Stanislaus National Forest**

19777 Greenley Road  
Sonora, CA 95370  
(209) 532-3671  
TDD: (209) 533-0765

**Mi-Wuk Ranger District**

24695 Hwy 108  
PO Box 100  
Mi Wuk Village, CA 95346  
(209) 586-3234  
TDD: (209) 586-0262

**Summit Ranger District**

#1 Pinecrest Lake Road  
Pinecrest, CA 95364  
(209) 965-3434  
TDD: (209) 965-0488

**Calaveras Ranger District**

5519 Hwy 4  
PO Box 500  
Hathaway Pines, CA 95233  
(209) 795-1381  
TDD: (209) 795-2854

**Groveland Ranger District**

24545 Hwy 120  
Groveland, CA 95321  
(209) 962-7825  
TDD: (209) 962-6406

**For current road conditions,  
call the Cal Trans  
Voice-Activated Road Information Line  
at 1 (800) 427-7623.**

**For a CalTrans diagram of  
correct chain  
positioning for vehicles,  
go on-line at:**

**[http://www.dot.ca.gov/dist2/chainup/pdf/  
chainchart.pdf](http://www.dot.ca.gov/dist2/chainup/pdf/chainchart.pdf)**