Are you ready for the big one? Storm that is!

San Bernardino – The California Department of Transportation (Caltrans) is alerting motorists that a large-scale storm is forecasted to begin tonight. Another holiday weekend with President’s Day on Monday, February 20, will bring thousands of tourists to mountain regions which results in increased traffic volumes. Delays from four or more hours are typical to get to mountain resort locations when traveling from urban areas.

Caltrans Maintenance crews have been working steadily since the last storm to repair potholes, clean drains, restore shoulders/turnouts and prepare the roadways for the next event. The crews will begin the 24/7, around the clock, shifts once the storm begins to keep the roadways safe and open to the traveling public.

Be advised that in past storms this winter, short term and/or long term road closures have been necessary for slide activity, slope erosion, flooding, visibility issues, accidents and snow conditions. Motorists must bring chains when traveling to mountain areas and be prepared for possible R-3 chain conditions, which means chains are required – all vehicles - no exceptions! Be reminded that if roadways close and only residents are permitted – you must have your current address on your license or registration per law enforcement.

Please monitor travel conditions for your destination by using television, radio and phone applications. You may use the Caltrans Quick Map to monitor conditions including chain controls at http://quickmap.dot.ca.gov/. Below are some helpful tips to keep everyone safe:

- Try to avoid travel during the storm. Wait until conditions have cleared before you get on the road.
- Bring chains for your vehicle—even if it is NOT snowing! NEVER INSTALL CHAINS ON THE ROADWAY AND BLOCK TRAFFIC! Use designated areas or turnouts for chain installation.
- Slow down, turn on headlights, leave space between vehicles, drive in middle lane on freeways to avoid hydroplaning, and steer clear of road crews and equipment.
- Follow all commands from Caltrans crews, chain installers, law enforcement and emergency responders.
- Check fluids, tires, windshield wipers and brakes before you leave home.
- Fill your gas tank before you go up the hill.

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Bring warm clothing, hats, gloves and footwear suited for snow/ice conditions. Bring blankets if possible.

- **Charge your cell phone in advance and bring a backup charger.**
- Bring cat litter and small shovel should your vehicle become disabled in ice or snow.
- If you become snowbound – stay in your vehicle! It provides temporary shelter and makes it easier for rescuers to locate you.
- Accelerate and decelerate slowly. Apply the gas slowly to accelerate to regain traction and avoid skids. **It takes longer to slow down on icy roads.**
- Increase your following distance from three to four seconds to eight to ten seconds. This will provide more distance for you to stop.
- Know your brakes! If you have anti-lock brakes (ABS) and need to slow down quickly, press hard on the pedal while braking--ABS will activate.
- **Stay home. If you really don’t have to go out, don’t.** Even if you can drive well in the snow, not everyone else can.

**Etiquette for mountain visitors:**

- **DO NOT TRESPASS!** Never play in the snow on roadways or private property. Go to designated snow play areas.
- **DON’T TRASH THE MOUNTAINS! TAKE YOUR TRASH WITH YOU!** Bring trash bags to dispose of your litter – keep it in your vehicle until you can dispose of it in a trash receptacle. The fine for litter is up to $1,000.

Caltrans wants your trip to snow-filled mountain resort areas to be fun – **BUT SAFE!** Following these tips will make your trip more enjoyable and perhaps save a life.

Source: AAA.com

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