



NEWS RELEASE

06-471

Date: Wednesday, December 13, 2006
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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW BEFORE YOU GO TO THE MOUNTAINS THIS WINTER

San Bernardino County – The snow is coming and driving in the winter terrain can be challenging. Caltrans, California Highway Patrol (CHP), U.S. Forest Service, San Bernardino County Sheriff, San Bernardino County Fire and the Big Bear Lake Resort Association have compiled winter driving tips for motorists who plan to travel to the mountains during the winter season.

WINTER DRIVING TIPS:

- ?? Keep three car lengths away from the vehicle in front of you. The distance needed to stop on ice is twice as long as you would need to brake.
- ?? **NEVER** brake suddenly while driving on ice – use brakes lightly.
- ?? If you are required to put chains on, look for a turnout or find a safe area to pull over to the right side of the road out of the flow of traffic. **DO NOT STOP IN THE MIDDLE OF THE ROADWAY TO PUT CHAINS ON.**
- ?? Black ice remains on the roadway that is not subject to direct sunlight. Be careful when driving into shady areas and cautiously slow your vehicle on approach.
- ?? If you go into a skid, special maneuvering is required. In a Front Wheel Drive, when your car begins to slide, slowly remove your foot from the accelerator, until you feel your wheels regain traction – do not brake! As your tires grab the road, slowly turn the steering wheel in the direction you want your front wheels to go. In a Rear Wheel drive vehicle, when you start to spin, remove your foot from the gas pedal and slowly steer in the direction you want the car to go. If you are still skidding, counter-steer until your vehicle is pointing in the right direction. Never apply steady pressure to the brakes.
- ?? Make sure you can see out all windows of your vehicle before you drive.
- ?? Use your low beams when driving in fog, ice or snowstorms.
- ?? Reduce your speed before you approach a turn. Avoid sudden acceleration or deceleration. Travel gently, meaning move slowly, turn slowly, and brake slowly. Sudden changes can cause a skid.

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- ?? Be especially aware of your surroundings, including other drivers that may be losing control on the roadway. The posted speed limit may be 45-mph, however, that does not mean 45-mph is a safe speed for the conditions.
- ?? When driving uphill pick a path that will allow the most traction.
- ?? Make sure your tires have good tread and are properly inflated. Chains may be required in mountain areas so plan ahead. Make sure you install the chains on the drive tires. Refer to your vehicle's manual or contact your dealer if you are unsure if your vehicle is two wheel or rear wheel drive. It is crucial to put the chains on the proper tires.
- ?? Carry emergency supplies, including: food, water, warm clothing, blankets, medication and a cell phone.
- ?? Caltrans maintenance crews work continuously day and night using de-icing agents to keep the roadways clear for travelers. Please be patient and courteous while Caltrans crews work to keep the roads clear.
- ?? Be courteous to other drivers and be aware of driving conditions before you make your trip.

CHAIN CONTROL REQUIREMENT LEVELS:

- W: **No Restrictions** - Watch for snow on pavement.
- R-1: Chains are required on all commercial vehicles (trucks or buses). All other vehicles (cars, pick-ups, vans, etc.) must have either snow tread tires or chains on the drive axle.
- R-2: Chains are required on all vehicles except four-wheel drives with snow tread tires. Four-wheel drive vehicles must carry chains in the vehicle.
- R-3: Chains required - ALL VEHICLES - no exceptions.

Snow chains can be purchased at retail department stores, sporting goods, and auto parts stores. Mountain weather can change dramatically on very short notice. For current road conditions, call Caltrans Public Affairs at (866) 383-4631 or Road Conditions at (800) 427-ROAD (1-800-427-7623). You may also check our website at www.caltrans8.info for road information and closures.

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