



# State Chain Laws

January 2012

- Alabama.....Tire chains, or metal studded or safety spike tires of reasonable proportions may be used when required for safety because of snow, rain or other slippery conditions.
- Alaska .....It is unlawful to operate a motor vehicle with studded tires or tires with chains attached on a paved highway or road from May 1 through September 15, inclusive, north of 60 North Latitude and from April 15 through September 30, inclusive, south of 60 North Latitude, except that at any latitude on a paved portion of the Sterling Highway a person may not operate a motor vehicle with studded tires or tires with chains attached from May 1 through September 15, inclusive. The commissioner of public safety shall by emergency order provide for additional lawful operating periods based on unusual seasonal or weather conditions. Upon application, a special individual traction permit may be issued by the Department of Administration allowing the operation of a motor vehicle with studded tires or chains at any time at the discretion of the vehicle owner. The fee for the special individual permit is one-third of the biennial registration fee applicable to that class of vehicle. The department may provide an appropriate sticker or other device identifying the vehicle to which the permit applies. "Studded tire" means a tire with metal studs or spikes imbedded in the periphery of the tire surface, and protruding not more than one-fourth inch from the tire surface.
- Arizona .....Permissible when required for safety because of snow, ice or other conditions tending to cause a vehicle to skid. If a mountain pass or other roadway is posted vehicles must use chains because of immediate weather conditions, then the vehicle must chain up or stop until the posting is lifted. From October 1 to May 1 pneumatic tires containing metal type studs of tungsten carbide or other suitable material that are inserted or constructed in a manner so that the number of studs or the percentage of metal in contact with the roadway does not exceed three per cent of the total tire area in contact with the roadway under any conditions.
- Arkansas .....Chains of reasonable proportions may be used on any vehicle when required for safety. Pneumatic tires with flat-headed studs projecting 1/16 inch or less beyond the tread may be used on trucks up to 6,000 lbs. in weight when required for safety on ice or snow. Only during the period from November 15 of each year until April 15 the following year.
- California.....Required to be equipped with tire traction devices when entering a signed restricted area. There are three requirements in California. Requirement One (R1): Chains, traction devices or snow tires are required on the drive axle of all vehicles except four wheel/ all wheel drive vehicles. Requirement Two (R2): Chains or traction devices are required on all vehicles except four wheel/ all wheel drive vehicles with snow-tread tires on all four wheels. (NOTE: Four wheel/all wheel drive vehicles must carry traction devices in chain control areas.) Requirement Three (R3): Chains or traction devices are required on all vehicles, no exceptions. There is no requirement for trucks to carry chains during any specified time period. For more information, go to Caltrans' Web site at <http://www.dot.ca.gov/hq/roadinfo/chcontrl.htm> and <http://www.dot.ca.gov/hq/roadinfo/ChainRequire.pdf>.
- Colorado .....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 along the roadway, 511 traveler information, [www.cotrip.org](http://www.cotrip.org), and media outlets. Metal chains must consist of two circular metal loops, one on each side of the tire, connected by not less than nine evenly spaced chains across the tread. Commercial vehicles having four or more drive wheels must chain four wheels. Dual tire chains are acceptable. Approved alternative traction devices include wheel sanders and the AutoSock. Also tire cables are not permitted by law as an alternative

traction device but there are two exceptions that can be found at [www.cotrip.org](http://www.cotrip.org). **Chain Law Level 1**; All single drive axle combination commercial vehicles must chain all four driver wheels; cables are not permitted as ATD'S..All other commercial vehicles must have snow tires or chains. Level 1 may be implemented any time there is a 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. Auto transports must comply to the extent possible without causing damage to the hydraulic lines. Busses 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. Commercial vehicles traveling on I-70 in either direction between milepost 133 (Dotsero) and 259 (Morrison) from Sept. 1 from May 31 must carry sufficient chains at all times to be in compliance with the Colorado chain law. For more information, go to CDOT's Web site at <http://www.coloradodot.info/library/Brochures/ChainTips.pdf>

- Connecticut..... Studded tires and any other non-skid devices may be used from November 15 - April 30.
- Delaware..... Studded tires are permitted from October 15 - April 15 and tire chains of reasonable proportions may be used upon any vehicle when required for safety because of snow, ice or other conditions tending to cause a vehicle to slide or skid.
- Georgia ..... Safety spike metal studs may be used when conditions demand them. A set of chains is also permissible for all vehicles likely to encounter conditions requiring chains.
- Idaho..... Studded snow tires are permissible from October 1 to April 30. There are no specific restrictions on the use of tire chains in Idaho. While it may be legal to use the tires, officials advise against it unless conditions warrant. Studded tires are snow tires with small metal cleats embedded in the tread, and may cause undue wear on bare roadways. There are times when chains are required. Signs will be posted "Chains required beyond this point" when the road is snow-covered or icy.
- Illinois..... Tire chains of reasonable proportion will be legal when required for safety because of snow, ice or other conditions causing vehicles to skid.
- Indiana ..... When required for safety because of snow, ice or other conditions, tire chains of reasonable proportions may be used on the highways. From October 1 to May 1, tires in which ice grips or tire studs of wear-resisting materials have been inserted may be used.
- Iowa ..... Permissible from November 1 to April 1 upon any vehicle when required for safety because of snow, ice, or other conditions tending to cause a vehicle to skid.
- Kansas..... Permissible upon any vehicle when required for safety because of snow, ice or other conditions tending to cause a vehicle to skid.
- Kentucky..... Permissible when icy road conditions exist. Where chains are used on rubber-tired vehicles, the cross chains shall be not more than three-fourths (3/4) of an inch in thickness or diameter, and shall be spaced not more than ten (10) inches apart, around the circumference of the tires.
- Louisiana..... Permissible upon any vehicle upon any vehicle when required for safety because of conditions tending to cause a vehicle to slide or skid.
- Maine..... Studded tires are permitted from October 2 to April 30. Permissible when icy road conditions exist. Permits can be issued to use studded tires during prohibited months.
- Maryland..... In case of declared snow emergency, chains will be required on certain designated highways. Studded snow tires are not allowed on vehicles having a registered gross weight of more than 10,000 pounds.
- Massachusetts ..... Studded tires are permissible in Massachusetts between November 1 and May 1.
- Michigan..... Permissible upon any vehicle when required for safety because of snow, ice, or other conditions tending to cause a vehicle to skid.

- Minnesota ..... Permitted when road conditions (ice and snow) require tire chains. Studded pneumatic tires are not allowed on Minnesota registered vehicles.
- Mississippi ..... Permissible upon any vehicle when required for safety because of snow, ice, or other conditions tending to cause a vehicle to skid.
- Montana ..... Chains are permissible from October 1 until May 31, but not mandatory unless the department makes that determination and notices are posted. They are then required on one set of drive axles. It is also permissible to use tire chains of reasonable proportions or pneumatic tires (means a tire in which compressed air or nitrogen is designed to support the load.), studded tires, that may not protrude more than one-sixteenth of an inch beyond the tire tread or that are clearly marked by the manufacturer on the sidewall all season mud and snow, upon a vehicle when required for safety because of snow, ice, or other conditions tending to cause a vehicle to skid.
- Nebraska ..... Permissible upon any vehicle when required for safety because of snow, ice, or other condition tending to cause a vehicle to slide or skid. Pneumatic tires with metal or metal-type studs not exceeding five-sixteenths of an inch in diameter inclusive of the stud-casing with an average protrusion beyond the tread surface of not more than seven sixty-fourths of an inch are allowed to be used between November 1 and April 1.
- Nevada ..... Requires operators of all vehicles of more than 10,000 pounds (GVW) to install chains when chains or snow tire requirements are in effect. Vehicles over 10,000 pounds (GVW) are permitted in chain control areas when equipped with chains or Automatic Traction Devices (MTD) on drive axles. Studded snow tires are permitted between October 1 and April 30. For more information, go to NDOT's Web site at <http://www.nevadadot.com/business/trucker/>
- New Jersey ..... May be fitted with tire chains of reasonable proportions when roads, streets, and highways are slippery, because of rain snow, ice, oil, manner of construction or other reason; provided, however, that no tire chains shall be used at any time on improved highways when highway conditions do not make such use necessary for the safety of life or property. No person shall use any tire chains so constructed or installed as to be likely to be thrown so as to endanger any person or property.
- New Mexico..... Permissible upon any vehicle when required for safety because of snow, ice or other conditions tending to cause a vehicle to skid.
- New York..... Tire chains are required when a snow emergency has been declared.
- North Carolina ..... Permissible upon any vehicle when required for safety because of snow, ice or other conditions tending to cause a vehicle to slide or skid.
- North Dakota ..... Tire chains may be used when necessary. Pneumatic tires with metal stubs projecting to 1/16 inch above the tread surface may be used between October 15 and April 15.
- Ohio..... No person shall operate any motor vehicle, other than a public safety vehicle or school bus, that is equipped with studded tires on any street or highway in this state, except during the period extending from the first day of November of each year through the fifteenth day of April of the succeeding year
- Oklahoma ..... Permissible upon any vehicle when require for safety because of snow, ice, or other conditions tending to cause a vehicle to skid.
- Oregon ..... Tire chains are required when conditions demand because of snow, ice or other inclement weather and SNOW ZONE signs are posted. When signs are posted, you must use chains on any single drive axle vehicle rated over 10,000 pounds gross vehicle weight (GVW) and you must use chains if your vehicle is towing (such as a pickup towing a boat). Chains must also be used on the trailer or vehicle being towed. Under this condition, chains are not required on tandem drive axle vehicles. For chain information from within Oregon, call

511 or 1-800-977-ODOT (6368). From outside Oregon, dial 503-588-2941. Drivers who disobey the signs requiring chains or traction tires are subject to a traffic infraction, \$190 for failure to obey snow zone signs and \$544 for failure of a commercial vehicle to use chains. For more information, go to ODOT's Web site at <http://www.tripcheck.com/pages/>. Also for minimum chain requirements <http://www.tripcheck.com/Pages/RCMap.asp?mainNav=RoadConditions&staticNav=MinChainReqs>.

- Pennsylvania ..... Tires in which ice grips or tire studs of wear resisting material have been installed which provide resiliency upon contact with the road and which have projections not exceeding two thirty-seconds of an inch beyond the tread of the traction surface of the tire shall be permitted between November 1 and April 15. The Governor may by executive order extend the time tires with ice grips or tire studs may be used when highway conditions are such that such tires would be a safety factor in traveling Commonwealth highways. The use of tires with ice grips or tire studs contrary to the provisions of this subsection shall be unlawful. Tire chains may be temporarily used on vehicles during periods of snow and ice emergency if they are in conformance with regulations promulgated by the department.
- Rhode Island ..... Tire chains of reasonable proportions are permitted on any vehicle when required for safety because of ice, snow, or other conditions tending to cause a vehicle to skid.
- South Carolina ..... Permissible upon any vehicle when require for safety because of snow, ice, or other conditions tending to cause a vehicle to skid.
- South Dakota ..... Permissible upon any vehicle when required for safety because of snow, ice, or other conditions tending to cause a vehicle to slide or skid. The secretary of transportation may restrict public travel upon any state trunk highway system to four-wheel drive vehicles or motor vehicles equipped with tire chains.
- Tennessee ..... A person may operate on a highway a vehicle equipped with a tire which has imbedded in it wire or other material for improving traction on snow and ice during the period of October 1 through April 15 of each year. Such a tire shall be so constructed that the percentage of wire or other material in contact with the roadway does not exceed, after the first one thousand (1,000) miles of use or operation of any such tire, the wire or other material in contact with the roadway shall not exceed twenty percent (20%) of the total tire area in contact with the roadway. The studded tires allowed by this subsection shall not be used at any time on a vehicle with a maximum gross weight of more than none thousand pounds (9,000 lbs.) , unless such a vehicle is a school bus or an emergency vehicle. It is permissible to use tire chains of reasonable proportions on any vehicle when required for safety because of snow, ice, or other condition tending to cause a vehicle to skid.
- Texas ..... May be used when required for safety because of a condition that might cause the vehicle to skid.
- Utah ..... Vehicles likely to encounter conditions requiring chains must carry sets for at least one driving wheel on each side. Signs will designate when chains are required. When any designated highway is restricted, no vehicle or motor vehicle shall be allowed or permitted the use of the highway, during the period between November 1 and March 31, unless: 1. Said vehicle is equipped with either: a. Steel link chains or have chains in possession; or b. Mounted snow tires; or c. Elastomeric tire chains, designed for use with radial tires. 2. Four-wheel drive vehicles must have a minimum of two mounted snow tires to meet the requirements. 3. Radial tires without snow tread do not meet the requirements.
- Virginia ..... Permissible when required for safety because of snow, ice, or other conditions tending to cause a vehicle to slide or skid. It shall also be permissible to use on any vehicle whose gross weight does not exceed 10,000 pounds tires with studs which project no more than one-sixteenth of an inch beyond the tread of the traction surface of the tire when compressed if the studs cover no more than three percent of the traction surface of the tire. The use of studded tires is only permissible between October 15 to April 15.

- Washington.....The chain requirements are effective when the department of transportation has posted signs marked “chains required.” On certain routes sufficient tire chains must always be carried on the vehicle from Nov 1 to Mar 31. The number of chains required varies, depending on the number of axles and vehicle configuration. At least two extra chains must be carried on the vehicle. For more information, go to WSDOT’s Web site at [http://www.wsdot.wa.gov/commercialvehicle/chain\\_req.htm](http://www.wsdot.wa.gov/commercialvehicle/chain_req.htm).
- West Virginia.....It shall be permissible to use tire chains of reasonable proportions upon any vehicle when required for safety because of snow, ice or other conditions tending to cause a vehicle to skid, and it shall be permissible to use studded tires during the period from November 1 to April 15 of the following year: Provided, That in the interest of highway maintenance, no vehicle moved on a highway, other than school buses, shall be equipped with studded tires which are operational with a recommended air pressure greater than forty pounds per square inch.
- Wisconsin .....Permissible upon any vehicle when require for safety because of snow, ice, or other conditions tending to cause a vehicle to skid.
- Wyoming .....When the chain law is in effect due to snow, ice or other conditions, travel on a highway may be restricted to use only by motor vehicles utilizing adequate snow tires or tire chains, motor vehicles that are all-wheel drive or necessary emergency vehicles, including snow plows. In extremely hazardous conditions, travel may be restricted to use only by necessary emergency vehicles, including snow plows, and those vehicles utilizing tire chains or to all-wheel drive vehicles utilizing adequate snow tires with a mud and snow or all-weather rating from the manufacturer having a tread of sufficient abrasive or skid-resistant design or composition and depth to provide adequate traction under existing driving conditions. The prohibition or restriction of use shall be effective when signs, including temporary or electronic signs, giving notice thereof are erected upon that portion of the highway, and it shall be unlawful to proceed in violation of the notice. The operator of a commercial vehicle shall affix tire chains to at least two of the drive wheels of the vehicle at opposite ends of the same drive axle when the vehicle is required to utilize tire chains. Any person who operates a motor vehicle in violation of these restrictions is guilty of a misdemeanor and upon conviction shall be subject to a penalty of not more than \$250.00. Any person who operates a motor vehicle, where the results of the violation is an incident that causes the closure of all lanes in one or both directions of travel of that highway, is guilty of a misdemeanor and upon conviction shall be subject to a penalty of not more than \$750.00.
- No chain laws .....D.C., Florida, Hawaii, Missouri, New Hampshire, and Vermont.

## Canadian Chain Laws

- Alberta .....Allowed when conditions warrant.
- British Columbia.....Vehicles in the mountains must be equipped with snow tires or chains from Nov 1 to Apr 30.
- Manitoba .....Permissible upon a motor vehicle where required for safety.
- New Brunswick .....May also be carried in the vehicle for use in ice and snow conditions.
- Newfoundland.....Required on drive wheels when there is snow or ice on the surface of the highway.
- Nova Scotia.....Permissible upon any vehicle when required for safety because of snow, ice or other conditions tending to cause a vehicle to slide or skid.
- Prince Edward Island....Permissible to use tire chains.

Quebec ..... The Minister of Transport may authorize, under the conditions and for the period he determines, the use of certain types of non-skid devices for such road vehicles as he may designate.

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