

Local resident detour options when I-84 is closed

Interstate 84 in eastern Oregon may be temporarily closed at times due to severe weather, crashes or emergency service operations such as:

- Ice or snow events that result in motorists' inability to maintain control of their vehicles.
- Dense fog, blowing snow or dust events that limits visibility to less than 500 feet.
- Jackknifed trucks or vehicle crashes that block both traffic lanes.
- Emergency response operation.
- Life Flight landings/take-offs.
- Law enforcement crash investigations.

When a freeway closure event occurs

ODOT will stop traffic in the closest community downstream from the initial closure location. This is done to prevent travelers from becoming stranded in areas without access to appropriate services (gas stations, restaurants, motels, etc.).

Unfortunately, this may also prevent local residents from getting home if they live in an area that is between the community-location closure and the actual incident site.

Example: Westbound freeway is blocked at MP 310 due to crash south of Baker City. The route is closed at Exit 374 in Ontario to prevent travelers from becoming stranded on freeway.

A westbound traveler who lives in Huntington may be stuck in Ontario for several hours, even when road conditions to Huntington are passable.

Accommodating local residents

To help get local travelers home under these circumstances ODOT may provide access to closed freeway sections when it is safe and prudent to do so. This process will only be available for local residents/deliveries and may require drivers to show picture identification with address to prevent other travelers from becoming stranded on closed roadways.

In the event this detour option is available, a web link listing the details will be posted on **TripCheck.com** in the closure alert message.

"This won't be available during every closure, so people will need to check TripCheck.com for current information," said ODOT Public Information Officer Tom Strandberg. "If conditions allow, we'll try to get you home."

To learn more contact Tom Strandberg at 541-963-1330 or by email at thomas.m.strandberg@odot.state.or.us.

Icy conditions: what you should know

Bridges and overpasses are the most dangerous parts of the road in the winter, but ice can show up anywhere, unannounced — in a shady corner or under a canopy of leafless trees. Ideally, you'd never drive on ice: Ice on the road prevents tires from gripping, so steering is difficult, stopping is harder and driving is unpredictable.

And when conditions are icy, even having a four-wheel drive vehicle won't help much — unless you have chains on the tires. Chains or other gripping devices are the best way to travel on ice, if you have to travel. But even with chains, stopping distance is still several times greater than on dry pavement with ordinary tires.



Black ice can fool you

It gets even more challenging when black ice appears. Also called glare ice or clear ice, black ice is a thin layer of ice on the roadway and it is particularly hazardous because the road looks wet, not icy. Black ice isn't really black; it's so thin and transparent that the darker pavement shows through. It often has a matte appearance rather than the expected gloss.

Black ice is most common at night and very early in the morning, when temperatures are typically their lowest. It is usually thin enough that it melts soon after sunlight hits it, but it can last much longer on shaded areas of roadways and parts of the road where traffic isn't traveling. Bridges and overpasses are danger spots: since they do not receive as much heat from the ground and lose more heat to the air, they can drop below freezing even when the rest of the roadway doesn't.

If you have to go out during times when roads and bridges are icy, remember these tips:

- Turn off your cruise control, be alert and drive cautiously to avoid ice on the road ahead.
- Slow down and keep your distance from vehicles in front of you. Continue to adjust your speed for the conditions.
- Allow about three times as much space between vehicles.
- Look for signs of ice other than on the roadway: on windshield wipers, side view mirrors, road signs, trees or fences. If ice has formed on any of these things, it may be on the road.
- If your vehicle feels like it's floating, gradually slow down; don't slam on your brakes or you may skid out of control.
- Do not drive through snow drifts: they may cause your vehicle to lose traction.
- When signs say "Chains required," you must put chains or other approved devices on your vehicle.



Driveway snow can't go on the road

The state highway is not a good place to deposit snow from your driveway. In fact, it's against the law to deposit any object onto Oregon highways and highway right of way, including snow.

Placing driveway snow on the road or shoulder creates a hazard for other highway users and for ODOT's snowplow operators. Chunks of snow and ice form an uneven road surface that can surprise drivers and cause crashes.

When snowplows create berms of snow

at the end of driveways, ODOT asks property owners to help by shoveling that snow to the sides of their driveways, rather than back onto the road or shoulder.

If you shovel snow onto the roadway, you will be asked to clear it away. Or ODOT may remove the snow and bill you for the cost of doing so. In addition, you may be cited under Oregon law; violations are punishable as a misdemeanor under Oregon Revised Statute 374.990.