

Commercial Motor Vehicle Chain Law



Special Circumstances

Commercial Vehicles With Flammable, Combustible or Explosive Cargo

The driver will affix chains as early as possible when the traction of the vehicle is compromised (once the pavement is covered by snow) at a safe location.

Autotransport Carriers

The driver may reduce the required number of chains used if their use would jeopardize the hydraulic lines of the vehicle. However, other ATDs or winter tires are required if chains are not used.

Chain up area is full or unavailable

The driver may proceed beyond the chain up area to the next safe location to affix or remove chains.

Chaining up Trailers

Chains are not required on trailers

Passing during chain law

Vehicles subject to the restriction are required to use the right lane and prohibited from passing other vehicles unless failing to do so would result in a loss of traction.

The information contained within this document comes from the Colorado Revised Statutes 42-4-106 and the Code of Colorado Regulations 601-14. It applies to all Interstate, Federal and State Highways in Colorado.

What is the Commercial Motor Vehicle Chain Law?

The Commercial Motor Vehicle Chain Law is a requirement for all large vehicles to affix chains or alternate traction devices (ATDs) to all drive tires (up to four). Even though it has “commercial” in the name, the requirement is based on the Gross Vehicle Weight Rating (GVWR) or Gross Combined Weight Rating (GCWR) for the vehicle regardless of its use (private or commercial).

What vehicles must comply with the Commercial Motor Vehicle Chain Law?

Any motor vehicle with a GCWR/GVWR of 16,001 pounds or more must comply with the Commercial Motor Vehicle Chain Law. This includes vehicles in commerce and private vehicles such as recreational vehicles. This includes two/four/all-wheel drive vehicles that meet the weight requirement.

How will I know when the Commercial Motor Vehicle Chain Law is in effect?

At a minimum, the Colorado Department of Transportation (CDOT) will notify the public of the travel restriction with erected static and electronic variable message roadway signs. Additionally, CDOT may utilize radio channels, the official CDOT travel website (www.cotrip.org), phone message system, email, text and other automated personal notification systems.

How do I comply with the Commercial Motor Vehicle Chain Law?

Vehicles subject to the law, except buses, are required to have tire chains or ATDs on at least four drive tires. If the vehicle has less than four drive tires, you are required to have chains or ATDs on all drive tires. Buses are required to have tire chains or ATDs on at least two drive tires.

Where can I put my chains on and take them off?

There are designated chain up/chain down areas at common locations where the law is implemented or terminated. If chain law is in effect, look for roadway signs indicating where the nearest chain up/down area is located. These areas are well marked, lighted and away from traffic. Do not attempt to use the shoulder of the interstate to chain up/down as it is dangerous for you and passing traffic.

Specific chain up/down and parking locations can be found online at:

<https://www.colorado.gov/pacific/sites/default/files/I-70TruckParkingGuide%20Map.pdf>

How will I know that the Commercial Motor Vehicle Chain Law is no longer in effect?

The chain law restriction will include mile points (also exit numbers), be indicated by official traffic signs or the restriction will end when the centerline or lane lines are visible on a descending grade.

Are there any restrictions on the types of chains or ATDs I can use?

Yes. Tire Chains consist of two circular hoops, one on each side of the tire, connected by not less than nine evenly spaced chains across the tire tread. The tire chains must meet the SAE requirements outlined in NACM 92805 (TC).

ATDs must be on the CDOT Approved Product List (APL). Drive wheel sanders and pneumatically driven chains (auto chains) are also allowed to meet the requirements. The APL can be found at: <https://www.codot.gov/business/apl>

Tire cables are not permitted on vehicles subject to the Commercial Motor Vehicle Chain Law.

