

Chaining Up: A Guide for Professional Drivers

Driving on winter roads in BC is a demanding task, even for the most experienced commercial driver. If you operate a commercial vehicle and travel outside the greater Vancouver or Victoria areas, you are required to carry tire chains (or other suitable traction devices) and comply with road signage and all traffic laws. Carriers must take steps to ensure their drivers are prepared for winter conditions and know when and how to safely and properly install chains or other approved traction devices.

Why it's important to chain up

- To improve traction and vehicle control.
- For your safety and the safety of other road users.
- To reduce the risk of property damage.
- To keep you moving and help prevent downtime.
- To avoid costly road closures.
- It's the law. Non-compliance can lead to a fine and penalty points.



When you need to chain up

- You feel tire chains may be necessary for traction and safety – don't wait until it's too late.
- Lights are flashing on designated chain up routes.
- Overhead message signs specify chain up is in effect.
- Government of BC websites and phone lines specify that chain up is in effect:
  - DriveBC.ca/ChainUp.php
  - 1-800-550-4997
- Not safe? Don't go. If conditions are treacherous, you may be better off stopping and waiting for conditions to improve.

Where to chain up safely

- Stop in a designated chain up area if you can get there safely. If you can't, find an accessible rest stop or pull-out. Avoid chaining up at the side of the road.
- Leave space between yourself and the truck in front. Allow for movement.
- Secure your truck. Apply the parking brake and turn off the engine.
- Activate hazard lights. Make sure they're working and clear of mud and snow.
- Use suitable non-slip wheel chocks to help secure the truck and trailer.



Protect yourself and follow safe work practices

- Follow company health and safety policies and practices.
- Use 3-points of contact (2 hands and one foot, or 2 feet and one hand) and climb down from the cab slowly.
- Wear warm, waterproof, slip-resistant footwear and a compliant high-visibility garment.
- Have multiple sets of gloves, waterproof clothing, and a small kneeling tarp.
- Use a headlamp at night or in low-light conditions.
- Get close to the tires to minimize overextending your reach.
- Stay balanced. Keep feet at shoulder width when crouching.



Advice for driving safely with chains

- Adapt driving techniques to road and weather conditions.
- Don't exceed speeds of 50 km/h.
- Avoid running chains on bare pavement, hitting curbs, and spinning wheels.
- Listen and watch for loose chains. Stop in a safe place to check chains, and adjust as necessary.
- Inspect chains after use. Repair or replace when necessary.

Know before you go

- Commercial vehicles over 11,794 kg must carry steel tire chains from October 1 to April 30 on most BC highways.
- Make sure your chains are the right size for your tires.
- Follow the manufacturer's written instructions.
- Discuss current road conditions and upcoming weather events with your dispatcher.
- Employers have a legal duty to provide instruction and training to keep you safe on the job. Learn how to safely install chains before you need them.

For more information on winter driving safety, visit RoadSafetyAtWork.ca/Winter.

For information on highway conditions, visit DriveBC.

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