

WINTER TRAVEL MADE EASIER

Public safety agencies and communities along the Interstate 70 corridor from Dotsero to Vail have come together this winter to join the Colorado Department of Transportation in activating new traffic incident management practices when travel along I-70 is impacted by severe weather, crashes and other circumstances. With multi-agency involvement along the 60-mile route, motorists will be directed to nearby services and facilities where complete and accurate updates will be available to assist with winter travel decisions.

TIPS FOR I-70 TRAVELERS

Use this guide to learn how Staged Closures and Staged Releases will impact your daily or cross country travel on I-70 through Eagle County.

STAGED CLOSURES

During a prolonged eastbound closure, traffic will be distributed to communities along I-70 to prevent any one town from being overwhelmed. It's designed to progressively close the interstate at points west of Vail as towns nearer the closure point begin to fill up with traffic. As an example, when Vail Pass is closed eastbound, as Vail becomes full of vehicles, electronic variable message signs will indicate Vail parking is full and advise through-traffic motorists to exit at Avon and Edwards. Local traffic will be allowed to proceed. Only in rare cases will law enforcement actually staff closures on the interstate. As Avon and Edwards fill with cars, signs will direct motorists to exit at Eagle and Gypsum. The Staged Closures are reversed for westbound incidents.

STAGED RELEASES


The Staged Release programs systematically reopens the interstate safely and efficiently so as not to create gridlock. The program is based on the concept of releasing vehicles that have been stored on I-70 and in the towns closest to the closure point before allowing additional vehicles to enter the corridor. Once all stored traffic has been released, the interstate will be officially opened. Traffic will be seen moving along on I-70 before it is announced as "open."

The Winter Travel Guide has been produced as a public service by the Town of Vail Community Information Office. Call (970) 479-2115 for additional copies or visit www.vailgov.com for an online guide.




I-70 Eagle County Winter Travel Guide

- Road Condition Information
- Traveler Assistance
- Winter Driving Tips




ROAD CONDITION INFORMATION

Eagle County Alert
Receive personalized road alerts from public safety dispatchers sent directly to your e-mail, cell phone, pager, smartphone, PDA or other handheld device. Visit www.eagleart.org to subscribe. Recommended for Eagle, Summit and Lake County residents.

Phone
State - 511 or (877) 315-7623
Local - (970) 479-2226

Local Radio
89.9 FM, 92.3 FM, 93.1 FM, 97.7 FM, 101.7 FM, 104.7 FM and 1610 AM

Web
www.cotrip.org

Cable TV
Cable Channels 10/21 and 18 in Eagle County provide live feeds of the interstate and weather conditions.

Electronic Highway Signs
11 variable message signs, 6 eastbound and 5 westbound, from Dotsero to Vail provide real-time status reports on conditions ahead.

CHAIN LAW
When roads are snowy or icy, the chain law is often enacted along I-70 over Vail Pass as well as other mountain highways. The chain law applies to commercial vehicles and carries heavy fines for non-compliance. A chain-up area is located alongside eastbound I-70 at milemarker 178 in Vail, while a chain-down station is located westbound at milemarker 179 in Vail. When the chain law is in effect, new electronic speed limit signs will be used to lower the speed limit through these areas. Please use caution and passenger vehicles should travel in the left lane when possible.



VISITOR CENTERS

Eagle
The Eagle Information Center is located at Chambers Park, 100 Fairgrounds Rd. The center is staffed 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. Monday - Friday. Restrooms are accessible 24/7. Call (970) 328-5220.

Avon
The Avon Tourist Information Center is located at Traer Creek Plaza, 101 Fawcett Rd., Suite 240. Hours are 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. Monday - Friday with extended hours until 9 p.m. during traveler emergencies. Call ahead for details, (970) 476-1000.

Vail
The Vail Visitor Information Center, 241 S. Frontage Rd., Suite 8150, is located on the top deck of the Vail Village parking structure and is open daily 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. During prolonged road closures, the center will remain open until 10 p.m. to provide traveler information, including discounted lodging. Call (970) 476-4790 for details.

The LionsHead Visitor Information Center, 395 S. Frontage Rd. West, is located at the LionsHead parking structure and is open daily 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. Call (970) 476-4941.

FREE WINTER STORM ASSISTANCE FOR THE STRANDED MOTORIST

During extended closures of I-70, the Salvation Army will open one or more free centers in the Vail area for stranded motorists:

- Vail Chapel**
19 Vail Rd., south of the Main Vail Roundabout, Exit 176.
- Vail Municipal Building**
75 S. Frontage Rd., west of the Main Vail Roundabout, Exit 176.
- St. Patrick's Church**
476 Pine St., Minturn, Exit 171.

These centers are available to anyone who needs a warm place to stay until I-70 has been reopened. Motorists are discouraged from sleeping in their vehicles due to the potential for carbon monoxide poisoning. Pets are welcome, but must be leashed or in a crate.

Always listen to 1610 AM radio in Vail or call first for availability status and directions, (970) 479-2226 or (970) 479-2200.

WEATHER DEFINITIONS

Heavy Snow Warning - Snow accumulations of 6 inches or more within 12 hours or 8 inches or more within 24 hours are expected at lower elevations, with 8 inches or more in 12 hours and 12 inches or more in 24 hours expected in mountain areas.

Winter Storm Warning - Heavy snow is expected, aggravated by blowing and drifting conditions.

Blizzard Warning - Sustained or frequent wind gusts of 35 mph or more for at least 3 hours, reducing visibility to less than 1/4 mile.

WINTER DRIVING TIPS

Maintain Traction
Start and stop gradually to avoid losing traction in wet or slippery conditions. Drive at steady speeds, avoiding sudden starts or stops. Accelerate slightly when approaching a hill, then maintain steady speed going up. Gearing down ahead of downgrades can avoid brake wear and reduce the chances of sliding.

Skids
Driving sensibly and steadily will avoid most skids. Anticipating turns or lane changes will help. If your vehicle begins to skid, remove your foot from the accelerator or brake and steer in the direction of the skid. When the vehicle steadies itself, turn the wheels straight and proceed.

Braking
Be gentle with braking pressure during slippery road conditions. Gentle pumping action on disc brakes will avoid locking the wheels and sending the vehicle into a skid or spin. Anti-lock braking systems provide this action for you. Avoid braking on curves by driving through them at a safe, steady speed. Gear down for going both uphill and downhill.



4WD
Four-wheel drive vehicles can't stop better or faster on ice and snow than 2WD vehicles, even if they're locked into 4WD. The heavier the vehicle, the longer it takes to stop. Many of the popular sport utility vehicles (SUVs) are heavy and require a greater stopping distance.

- Pack a Readiness Kit**
Your safety checklist should include:
- flares/reflectors • blanket • shovel • scraper
 - jumper cables • snow brush • coat/gloves/hat
 - chain/tow strap • nonperishable food • tire chains
 - batteries • matches/lighter/candle • flashlight
 - sand/traction mats • sleeping bag • first aid kit

STUCK OR STRANDED - WHAT TO DO

- If the road ahead is clear and your car can be dug out, use your shovel and traction mat or sand to free the vehicle. Ease the vehicle out gently and steadily to avoid spinning the tires.
- If the road ahead is not clear or you slid off the road, and there is no shelter in sight, you are stranded. Do not leave your vehicle. Be sure the vehicle exhaust is clear of snow and keep a window slightly open for ventilation. Run the vehicle only a few minutes at a time to stay warm. Dress in layers for warmth and cover your entire body with a blanket or sleeping bag. If there are two or more persons, huddle together for warmth.
- If you are stranded, do not panic. CDOT maintenance crews will be working to open the highways and look for stranded motorists. If you are stranded on a secondary or backcountry road, remain in the shelter of your vehicle until the storm passes so you can be spotted or can proceed safely on foot.

ALTERNATE ROUTES TO DENVER

If I-70 is closed over Vail Pass, call 511 to check if the following alternate routes are open:

- The shortest detour around Vail Pass is to use exit 171 from I-70 (U.S. 24 - Minturn/Leadville) and south over Tennessee Pass to Leadville, then north on State Highway 91 over Fremont Pass, returning to I-70 at Copper Mountain (53 miles).
- A longer detour around both Vail Pass and the Eisenhower Tunnel is via U.S. 24 (exit 171), south through Leadville to Buena Vista, then north on U.S. 285 to Denver (172 miles).
- A third detour route is State Highway 131. From I-70, use exit 157 (Wolcott/Steamboat Springs), north on Highway 131 to Toponas, east on State Highway 134 over Gore Pass to U.S. 40, south on U.S. 40 to Kremmling. Two options at Kremmling: south on State Highway 9 to I-70 at Silverthorne (total - 103 miles) OR east on U.S. 40 through Granby and over Berthoud Pass, returning to I-70 near Empire (total - 139 miles).

All three routes are primarily two-lane highways. Even if they are open to travel, these highways cross mountain passes and drivers should be prepared for winter driving conditions.

HELPFUL PHONE NUMBERS

- Chambers of Commerce**
Vail Chamber & Business Association (970) 477-0075
Vail Valley Partnership (970) 476-1000
Eagle Valley Chamber of Commerce (970) 328-5220
- Road Condition Hotlines**
State 511 or (877) 315-7623
Local (970) 479-2226
- Colorado Avalanche Info Center (970) 668-0600
Colorado State Patrol (Western Slope) (970) 824-6501
Eagle County Airport (970) 524-9490
Emergency (Police, Fire, Ambulance) 911
Public Safety Non-Emergency (970) 479-2200
Vail Parking Information (970) 479-2104

24-hour Emergency Medical Care in Eagle County
Vail Valley Medical Center (970) 476-2451

Immediate Medical Care Services in Eagle County
Avon Medical Center (970) 949-6100

RESPONDING AGENCIES

The new I-70 Incident Management Plan involves the cooperation and coordination of local and regional agencies representing more than 200 first responders throughout Eagle County:

Town of Avon, Avon Police Department, Colorado Department of Revenue (Motor Carrier Inspectors), Colorado Department of Transportation, Colorado Motor Carrier Association, Colorado State Patrol, Eagle County Office of Emergency Management, Eagle County Sheriff's Office, Eagle County Ambulance District, Greater Eagle Fire Protection District, Town of Eagle, Eagle Police Department, Eagle River Fire Protection District, ECO Transit, Federal Highway Administration, Town of Gypsum, Gypsum Fire Protection District, Town of Minturn, Minturn Police Department, Town of Vail, Vail Fire & Emergency Services Department, Vail Police Department, Vail Public Safety Communications Center, Western Eagle County Ambulance District.

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