

# Designated Winter Tire & Chain Routes

Winter tires or chains are required on most routes in British Columbia from October 1 to April 30. For select highways not located through mountain passes and/or high snowfall areas, tire and chain requirements end March 31.

These routes are marked with regulatory signs posted on highways throughout the province.

These signs are [enforced](#) by the police, ministry or other enforcement officials. Motorists who are not compliant may be turned away and fined.

## What is a Legal Winter Tire in B.C.?

A legal winter tire (on a standard passenger vehicle or a four-wheel/all-wheel vehicle) **MUST** have at least 3.5 mm of tread depth.

A winter tire must be labelled with either of the following:

- The letters "M" and "S", the minimum legal requirement (mud + snow/all season tires)



- The 3-peaked mountain/snowflake symbol (some manufacturers label with both the mountain snowflake and the M+S symbol)



**3-peaked mountain/snowflake tires offer better traction on snow and ice.** Summer tires are not permitted for driving during designated winter months. Chains on summer tires are not an acceptable substitute for legal winter tires on signed B.C. highways.

## Matching Winter Tires

We recommend drivers use four winter tires that are evenly matched in tread type and depth; however, you must have at least two matching winter tires on the primary drive axle, even when driving a 4X4 vehicle. Mixing tires with different tread patterns, internal construction and size compromises stability, and should be avoided.

## Air Pressure

Maintaining proper air pressure extends tread life and improves safety. Tire pressure decreases as temperatures drop, so check the pressure at least once a month when the tires are cold.

## Studded Tires

These tires may only be used on BC highways from October 1 to April 30 and the studs should not protrude more than 2 mm from the tread or traction surface of the tire. Use of studded tires outside of this period may result in a fine.

If you are using studded tires, you should have them on all four wheels for even traction. If using studded tires on the front of the vehicle they **MUST** be used on the back of the vehicle as well.

## Out-of-Province Visitors & Rental Vehicles

All [passenger vehicles](#) and [commercial vehicles](#) travelling B.C. highways from out-of-province must abide by B.C.'s winter tire and chain requirements.

RCMP, Commercial Vehicle Safety and Enforcement (CVSE), and other policing agencies can prevent you from travelling and issue fines for not complying with signs and regulations that require you to properly equip your vehicle for road conditions.

### Fines

- [Offence Act - Schedule 3 - Fines](#)
  - Motor Vehicle Act
    - Section 125 applies when passenger vehicles are not equipped with winter tires when/where required - \$121
    - Section 208(4) applies when commercial vehicles bypass an active chain up area - \$598
  - Motor Vehicle Act Regulations
    - Section 7.1635 applies when commercial vehicles are not carrying chains when/where required - \$196

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