

## **Proposed Actions to Ensure Safety and Greater Compliance with the Chain Law during Winter Storms**

Below are a series of actions that the Colorado Motor Carriers Association is asking that the State consider to increase safety and ensure greater compliance with the chain law.

- ❖ **Create Chain Check Points for Commercial Vehicles and Passenger Vehicles Leading to the Mountains on I-70 before and during Major Storms** - The best way to ensure that vehicles are prepared to travel on I-70 is to set up a checkpoint on the east and west ends of the corridor prior to anticipated storms and physically check whether the driver has proper equipment. If trucks do not have chains, they should not be permitted to continue until they obtain them. Along with this should the State provide temporary parking near these checkpoints if truckdrivers wish to wait out the storm.
- ❖ **Create More Overnight and Temporary Truck Parking on the I-70 Corridor and Others** - Many truckdrivers would like to park and take their mandated 10-hour rest period under federal law or merely wait out the storm until conditions improve, but in many cases there is nowhere to do so. In the case of the I-70 mountain corridor, the lack of truck parking is not a new problem. The corridor between Denver and Grand Junction has been critically short for overnight as well as temporary parking for years and when major storms occur, the problem is magnified. It is essential not only for matters such as the chain law but more importantly the safety of truckdrivers and the traveling public that we provide truckdrivers with adequate places to rest or wait out a storm if they wish.
- ❖ **Provide Additional Chain up/chain down Stations** - While there are some chain stations that are separated from the highway on I-70, where truckdrivers can apply/remove their chains safely, there are not enough. Asking truckdrivers to apply chains on the shoulder, less than two feet from traffic where automobiles are whizzing past at high speeds on icy roads, is not fair to those individuals and places them at serious risk. Sadly, we have seen several drivers killed and injured while applying chains on I-70.
- ❖ **Ensure Passenger Vehicles have Adequate Tires or Traction Devices** - Trucks are not the only vehicles that may slide out or lose traction. There are far more passenger vehicles that do so and many of those automobiles lack adequate tread or suitable tires for winter conditions. While a passenger traction law exists, much more must be done to ensure compliance so that those vehicles do not contribute to closures or crashes.
- ❖ **Implement a Chain Assist/Chain Management Program** - While many truckdrivers have chains, a number of interstate drivers rarely need them and may be unfamiliar with applying them. A chain assistance program, similar to one in California, that allows drivers to pay a private company a small fee to apply them at the chain station ensures that the task is done

right and quickly. This allows the chain station to accommodate more trucks in a shorter period of time and avoid backups.

❖ **Ensure Adequate Staffing Levels of the Colorado State Patrol (CSP) Along the I-70 Mountain Corridor** – A major factor in highway safety is enforcement which ensures that all drivers are following the rules and operating safely. Unfortunately, there is a serious shortfall of CSP officers on the I-70 Mountain Corridor. The troop has less than half the programmed number of officers due to the lack of and cost of housing which has made it difficult to retain staff. That translates into less enforcement and longer response times. It's critical that the State Patrol are adequately staffed in western Colorado.

❖ **More Consistent Application and Removal of Chain Law** – A frequent complaint of truckdrivers is what appears to be the inconsistency as to the application and removal of the chain law. Many complain that the Chain Law stays on too long which leads to trucks traveling on dry or damp roads leading to the breakage of chains and also proves damaging to roads. A more objective and consistent approach should be considered to prevent some of these problems.