

Opinion: Be smart when driving in winter conditions

By Leona Allen

The Tahoe Fire and Fuels Team would like to remind everyone that extra precautions need to be taken while traveling during the winter. Along with potential hazardous road conditions, motorists can expect extreme delays due to snow conditions or accidents. We recommend following these tips to ensure a safe trip to your destination:

- Ensure that your vehicle is stocked with extra warm clothing, food, water, a shovel and other survival supplies in case you become stuck on a mountain road.
- Make sure that your gas tank is full before leaving on any trip.
- Always carry chains (it's the law).
- Leave your headlights on while driving.
- Advise someone when you're leaving and where you're going.
- Drive carefully, even when the roads appear dry. Patches of ice tend to accumulate on curves and bridges when the rest of the roadway is clear.
- Clean the snow completely from your car. Any snow left on your roof can slide down unexpectedly and a thin glaze of ice can reflect in the sun, obstructing your view.
- Check road conditions before you leave. For California go online or call 800.427.7623). For Nevada go online or call 877.687.6237.
- You must stop and put on chains when highway signs indicate

chains are required. You can be cited by the California Highway Patrol and fined if you don't. You will usually have about a mile between "Chains Required" signs and the checkpoint to install your chains.

- If you are driving slower than the traffic around you, use turnouts so that others may pass.

Leona Allen works for Lake Valley Fire Protection District.