

Passenger Traction Vehicle Bill Passes House

The Colorado House passed HB 1207 last week and the bill is now on to the Senate. This bill is strongly supported by CMCA as it basically puts passenger vehicles on a level playing field with the commercial trucking industry, which has had strict chains laws in effect for years.

The bill clarifies the type of acceptable tires when the traction control law is put into effect as well as the level of tread that is required so as to better maintain control in such conditions. The law calls for a 3/8" minimum tread depth which is a standard used by several other states who have a chain and passenger traction law. It is also a recommended minimum by tire experts for reasonable traction in such conditions. In lieu of that standard a driver is permitted to use an AutoSock, tire chain, or other approved traction device.

The measure is particularly focused on I-70 between Morrison and Dotsero where traffic volumes traveling to the ski and resort areas is particularly heavy. Over the years problems concerns have increased as light duty vehicles have spun out or been involved in accidents that has not only been a safety problem but added to congestion. This measure will help to ensure, like their truck counterparts on those highways, that these drivers are prepared for conditions.

Rep. Dylan Roberts, the sponsor of the measure commented that "[Spun-out cars and SUV's] have a choking effect on our entire highway system and our local residents as well as any tourists who are not going to come up to our county anymore and spend their money because of how miserable the traffic is."

For CDOT, the biggest aspect of the bill is that it spells out exactly what passenger vehicles need to be equipped with and then sets that Sept. 1 to May 31 timeline for that carrying that equipment.

"It puts the onus on the driver now to have this equipment period, regardless of whether the traction law has been called, simply between the times of Labor Day to Memorial Day," CDOT spokeswoman Amy Ford said. "It puts them on par with the trucking."

Greg Fulton, the President of the Colorado Motor Carriers Association, stated that "CMCA is very supportive of the measure and we've been working on it with others for several years. We believe that this effort will greatly enhance safety and operations not only on I-70 but throughout the state as car drivers are better prepared for conditions."