

I-70 VAIL CHAIN STATION IMPROVEMENT PROJECT ANSWERS TO FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

What is a chain station?

A chain station is a designated area adjacent to the highway where truck drivers can stop to install or remove chains in accordance with Colorado's chain law. CDOT has constructed 21 paved and lighted chain stations along I-70 to provide a safe space for truck drivers to chain-up or chain-down outside of through traffic.

What is Colorado's chain law?

Colorado enacted the chain law in 1996 requiring commercial vehicles to chain up when the chain law is in effect for a segment of highway. The chain law goes into effect any time CDOT determines the road conditions warrant the use of chains. Colorado's chain law applies to all state, federal, and interstate highways. It includes two levels for commercial vehicles.

- *Chain Law Level 1* requires all single drive axle combination commercial vehicles to chain up. All four drive wheels must be chained; cables are not permitted as an alternate traction device. All other commercial vehicles must have snow tires or chains. Level 1 may be implemented any time there is snow covering any part of the traveled portion of pavement on an ascending grade.
- *Chain Law Level 2* requires all commercial vehicles to chain up. Auto transports must comply to the extent possible without causing damage to hydraulic lines. Buses must chain two drive wheels to comply. Level 2 may be implemented any time there is snow covering the entire traveled portion of pavement on an ascending grade or when driving conditions dictate this level is necessary to protect safety and minimize closures.

In addition, the chain law requires that all commercial vehicles traveling on I-70 between milepost 133 and 259 carry sufficient chains between September 1 and May 31.

Can trucks be required to stop at the Dotsero truck parking area during weather events?

CDOT can close I-70 to trucks between Dotsero and Golden only "when road conditions and traffic volumes are such that a public safety emergency is likely and imminent." Based on CDOT's mission "to provide the best multi-modal transportation system for Colorado that most effectively and safely moves people, goods, and information," CDOT takes closing movements on the highway very seriously. Using data, experience, and judgment, CDOT works to keep traffic moving on I-70 as much as possible and continuously monitors road conditions to identify potential public safety risks.

Truck drivers that proceed past Dotsero during a weather event are required to chain-up in the designated areas and continue on I-70. Thirty-minute parking for chain-up activities is allowed at the chain-up stations. Colorado State Patrol, Vail Police Department, and Eagle County Sheriff's Office partner to monitor the Vail chain station for trucks that are parking rather than chaining-up.

The Dotsero truck parking area provides emergency parking during an incident or severe weather event. During such an event, CDOT may allow parking at the Dotsero truck parking area for truck drivers that choose to wait out the chain law. CDOT recently installed restroom facilities at the Dotsero truck parking area to serve truck drivers that utilize the parking area.

Why can't the chain station be located further west, outside of Vail?

Chain stations should be located as close to the beginning of an ascending grade, such as Vail Pass, as possible. If chains are installed too far away from the pass, where they are needed, chains deteriorate and fall off the trucks prior to reaching the summit. In addition, installing chains too far away from the pass results in unnecessary damage to the pavement and increased maintenance costs.

What is included in this project?

The existing chain-up station on eastbound I-70 at MP 178 will be extended to the west approximately 1500'. The width of the chain station will match the width of the existing chain station. A wall is required between I-70 and the frontage road due to space constraints. The most current chain station light standard will be installed throughout the proposed chain-up station. In addition, the lights through the existing chain-up station will be upgraded to the most current chain station light standard. If funding allows, lights will be installed on westbound I-70 at the chain-down station at approximate MP 178.5.

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ANSWERS TO FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Why is CDOT constructing this project?

The existing chain-up station experiences capacity issues during certain weather events resulting in overflow into the I-70 through lanes. Extending the chain station will increase capacity for chaining activities and improve safety for truck drivers and I-70 through traffic by reducing overflow into the through lanes.

In addition, upgrading the chain station light to the most current standard will improve safety by increasing visibility for truck drivers and the traveling public when the chain law is in effect. The most current standard also reduces the amount of light trespass for neighboring properties.

How will light trespass onto neighboring properties be affected by this project?

The most current chain light standard that will be installed with this project is designed to minimize light trespass onto neighboring properties by using LED technology, which provides low glare and fully shielded luminaires. In addition, the design of the light pole has been improved to provide vertical illumination on either side of the truck. The longer mast arm allows the luminaires to be aimed towards the ground rather than toward adjacent properties.

Will lights be added to the chain down station on westbound I-70?

CDOT is actively seeking funding to incorporate approximately four lights at the chain down station on westbound I-70. If funding allows, four lights will be installed in an area where the berm has been fully developed. The lights will be located to allow the installation of up to 14 additional lights in the future. Installing lights at the chain down station will improve safety by increasing visibility for conducting chaining activities and for the traveling public to detect chaining activities. In addition, it will encourage truck drivers to use the chain down station rather than I-70 ramps through Vail for chain down activities.

Will noise be increased with this project?

The nearest residences that could be affected by noise on I-70 are located well beyond the distance that any noise barrier would provide an effective decrease in noise level. That being said, this project will reduce the amount of time truckers are parked on I-70, thereby reducing any associated noise. During significant weather events today, trucks are already parking within the area of the chain station extension and beyond at times. This project will provide opportunities for those trucks that are parked idly to actively begin chaining-up and continue on I-70.

How will this project affect air quality?

During significant weather events today, trucks are already parking within the area of the chain station extension. This project will reduce the amount of time trucks are idling on I-70 by providing more opportunities for trucks to actively begin chaining-up and continue on I-70, thereby reducing air quality impacts by trucks waiting to chain-up.

How will Gore Creek be affected by this project?

Currently, highway and frontage road drainage outlet directly into Gore Creek at a pipe near the end of the proposed chain station extension. Water quality will be improved as part of this project with the installation of a water quality treatment vault at this pipe that will treat the storm water prior to reaching the outfall at Gore Creek.

How is this project funded?

Funding is provided through CDOT's Responsible Acceleration of Maintenance and Partnerships (RAMP) program.

When will this project be constructed?

The project is scheduled for advertisement in May, 2015. Construction is expected to begin in July, 2015. The project is expected to span over two construction seasons with a winter shutdown between November, 2015 and March, 2016.

How can I get more information about the project?

Visit CDOT's website at www.coloradodot.info/projects/i70vailchainstation or contact a project representative:

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