

Press Release

[DEKRA tips on snow chains](#)

Well prepared for a winter tour

- ▶ The chains must match the tires
- ▶ Practice fitting them in the garage at home
- ▶ Do not drive faster than 30 mph with chains

Snow chains complete a car's winter equipment. They should always be in the trunk when heading for the mountains in winter. Even for four-wheel drive vehicles they are indispensable in heavy snowfall. Here are DEKRA's most important tips for using snow chains:

“Snow chains and tires must match. Keep the chains up to date when changing to a different tire size or a new vehicle”, recommends DEKRA accident researcher Luigi Ancona. When renting or buying snow chains, the data on the tires must be available.

Also important: “Make sure you familiarize yourself with the handling of the snow chains at home in the dry and in good light before you set off for the mountains”, explains Ancona. “Learning by doing in a snow flurry on an alpine pass is not only a nuisance, but it can also be dangerous.” A doormat to kneel on in the snow and lined work gloves serve well.

Snow chains are mounted on the drive axle, i.e., in the front for front-wheel drive and in the rear for rear-wheel drive. For all-wheel drive vehicles, consult the owner's manual. In most cases, the chains are also mounted on the front wheels.

Retighten after a short drive

When it comes to chain tension, the chain manufacturer's installation instructions are authoritative. And don't forget to retighten the newly installed chains after a short drive. It is better to switch off systems such as ESP or ASR when using snow chains to increase the traction effect because with chains, a little slippage favors propulsion. A look at the owner's manual reveals whether the vehicle has a special setting for operation with snow chains.

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In several countries, snow chains can be made mandatory in certain conditions on specific routes by road signs. Usually, they are not legally required on all four wheels, but only on the drive axle. Often a speed limit applies for vehicles with mounted chains, including motorcycles. If there is no legal speed limit, DEKRA experts recommend following the chain manufacturer's instructions. In any case, speeds with chains should not exceed around 30 mph (50 km/h) to avoid damage to the chain, tires, and vehicle.

Drive carefully even with chains

"A vehicle equipped with snow chains has better traction and more grip on snow-covered roads", says the DEKRA accident researcher. "Nevertheless, even with chains, careful driving is the order of the day, especially on curves." In general, the axle equipped with chains provides more grip and traction, while the other axle becomes "lighter" and slips away more quickly. If summer tires are mounted on the axle without chains, this effect is amplified.

When reaching a snow- and ice-free stretch of road, snow chains must be removed at the next opportunity. On dry roads, tires with chains have a longer braking distance and poorer handling characteristics than winter tires. In addition, use on snow-free roads can damage the tires and lead to increased wear on chains and road surface.

Chains that are no longer needed should be cleaned with water, allowed to dry, and sprayed with a little oil. Packed in a plastic cover, they are protected from corrosion and ready for the next trip to the mountains.

About DEKRA

DEKRA was originally founded in 1925 to ensure road safety through vehicle inspection. With a much wider scope today, DEKRA is the world's largest independent non-listed expert organization in the testing, inspection, and certification sector. As a global provider of comprehensive services and solutions, we help our customers improve their safety, security, and sustainability outcomes. In 2022, DEKRA generated sales totaling nearly EUR 3.8 billion. The company currently employs almost 49,000 people who offer qualified and independent expert services in approximately 60 countries on five continents. With a platinum rating from EcoVadis, DEKRA is now in the top one percent of sustainable businesses ranked.