

Relevant California Vehicle Code Sections

California Vehicle Code Section 558

A “snow-tread tire” is a tire which has a relatively deep and aggressive tread pattern compared with conventional passenger tread pattern.

California Vehicle Code Section 605

“Tire traction devices” are devices or mechanisms having a composition and design capable of improving vehicle traction, braking, and cornering ability upon snow or ice-covered surfaces. Tire traction devices shall be constructed and assembled to provide sufficient structural integrity and to prevent accidental detachment from vehicles. Tire traction devices shall, at the time of manufacture or final assembly, bear a permanent impression indicating the name, initials, or trademark of the assembling company or primary manufacturer, and the country in which the devices were manufactured or assembled in final form.

California Vehicle Code Section 27459

No person shall operate any motor vehicle, trailer or semitrailer upon any portion of a highway without tire traction devices when that portion of the highway is signed for the requirement of tire traction devices. In any case where a passenger vehicle or motortruck having an unladen weight of 6,000 pounds or less may be required by the Department of Transportation or local authorities to be equipped with tire traction devices, the devices shall be placed on at least two drive wheels, or the department or local authorities may provide, in the alternative, that the vehicle may be equipped with snow-tread tires on at least two drive wheels when the weather and surface conditions at the time are such that the stopping, tractive, and cornering abilities of the snow-tread tires are adequate. The snow-tread tires shall be of a type and design manufactured for use on snow as a replacement for tire chains or tire traction devices, shall be in good condition, and shall bear the marking of M-S, M/S, or other marking indicating that the tire was manufactured for use on snow, or, in the case of tires purchased before January 1, 1987, shall either bear the markings or, in the opinion of the inspecting officer, comply with the tread pattern requirements of Section 558.

California Vehicle Code Section 27460

Any passenger vehicle or motortruck having an unladen weight of 6,500 pounds or less and operated and equipped with four-wheel drive and with snow-tread tires on all four drive wheels may be operated upon any portion of a highway without tire traction devices, notwithstanding the fact that the highway is signed for the requirement of those devices and provided that tire traction devices for at least one set of drive wheels are carried in or upon the vehicle. The snow-tread tires shall meet the requirements specified in Section 27459, and the vehicle shall not, when so operated, tow another vehicle except as may be necessary to move a disabled vehicle from the roadway.

No person shall use those tires on four-wheel drive vehicles in place of tire traction devices whenever weather and roadway conditions at the time are such that the stopping, tractive, and cornering abilities of the tires are not adequate or whenever the Department of Transportation or local authorities, in their respective jurisdictions, place signs prohibiting their operation unless equipped with tire traction devices.