



**Pacific Northwest Region
Malheur National Forest
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News Release

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Winter forest travel safety tips

John Day, Prairie City, and Hines, Ore. – The Malheur National Forest would like to remind forest visitors that the conditions of forest roads can change dramatically without warning; wind, snow and rain events can quickly have substantial effects on road and trail conditions causing hazards and obstructions to travel.

Before traveling on the forest, it is advisable to consult your local ranger district office for the most current conditions on roads and trails.

“The forests can provide stunning scenery and recreational opportunities during the winter, but it is important to be aware of the dangers and risks associated with winter weather,” said Kevin Brock, Assistant Fire Management Office with the Blue Mountain Ranger District. “Snow storms, freezing temperatures and long exposure to the wind are all concerns when recreating in the forest in the winter months.”



Severe injuries and fatalities can occur during the winter due to unsafe road conditions after a snow or ice storm. Motorists should be aware of icy conditions on shaded areas of roadways, and always notify friends or family of planned whereabouts prior to travel. Brock also encourages motorists to have appropriate tires, tire chains, etc. and to not travel alone. Travelers should carry an emergency kit containing items such as water, food, warm clothing, a blanket, matches, a shovel and an axe.

Visitors to the forest should pay attention to their surroundings while in the woods. Malheur National Forest field season is limited this time of year; thus, fewer personnel are out to find stranded travelers.

People who remain outdoors for an extended period of time are susceptible to hypothermia, a condition where the body experiences abnormally low body temperature, which can lead to death. “It’s very important to dress in layers to maintain proper body temperature to avoid hypothermia,” said Brock.

Before heading out to enjoy your forest this winter, “know before you go” by contacting a forest office near you to get the latest information about current road conditions and seasonal closures.



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NEWS RELEASE

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Additionally, visitors should be aware of any current closures on the forest. **The closure implemented for the Canyon Creek Complex remains in effect due to hazards.** For the latest information and map of the closure area, visit: <http://www.fs.usda.gov/alerts/malheur/alerts-notice/?aid=29872>. The area will remain closed to all travel at this time.

For more great tips on backcountry snow sports visit: <http://www.treadlightly.org/tread-lightly-tips-for-responsible-backcountry-snowsports/>.

For more information on the Malheur National Forest, please visit us at:

- www.fs.usda.gov/malheur,
- follow [U.S. Forest Service- Malheur National Forest](#) on Facebook,
- and [@MalheurNF](#) on Twitter,
- or call the Supervisor's Office at 541-575-3000.

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