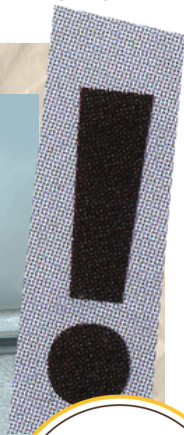


WYOMING WINTER 2025/2026 GUIDEBOOK

A HANDBOOK TO HAVE A SAFE, FUN WINTER ON THE ROADS



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visitolaramie.org

BEFORE GETTING

Started

This handbook is for informational purposes only and should not be used as a substitute for legal counseling or advice from an attorney or other qualified professionals. Information contained in this handbook does not constitute as legal advice. Please note that the laws and ordinances discussed herein can change or be amended due to subsequent court decisions or legislative actions.



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BEFORE HITTING THE ROAD

Download the 511 App

The 511 App is your one-stop guide to current road conditions in the state. Information can also be accessed at wyoroad.info or by **calling 511**. During the winter, make sure to always check road conditions before you travel, as well as the weather.



The map tells you the current road conditions

When green, road conditions are good
When yellow, road conditions are moderate. You may want to reconsider traveling.
When orange, road conditions are bad. Definitely reconsider travel and only travel if you only need to.
When red, the road is closed.



Use the **map view** to check live conditions before any trip. You can tap into the cameras and see what the road looks exactly like. Check the alerts tab for closures, chain laws or crash reports.

Always download offline maps in case cell service drops

THE 511 APP



WHAT TO EXPECT

Types of conditions

- Blowing Snow: Snow propelled by wind across the road at least one foot above the surface
- Drifted Snow: Drifts on any size that cause the drive to feel a bump or pull on the steering wheel
- Reduced Visibility: Visibility less than 400 feet for any reason
- Slick: Long, continuous sections of icy or snow packed road. At least 50% of road surface is covered in ice or snow.
- Slick in Spots: Short, non-continuous sections of ice or packed snow. Less than 50% of the road surface is covered in ice or snow.
- Strong Winds: Wind gusts of 40 mph with any other road conditions.

**KNOW
BEFORE
YOU GO**



www.wydot.info

**WYDOT'S TRAVEL
INFORMATION SYSTEM IS THE
ONE AND ONLY SOURCE FOR
UP-TO-THE-MINUTE
ROAD AND TRAVEL INFORMATION.**

POTENTIALLY DANGEROUS AREAS

Never assume clear skies in Laramie mean safe roads. Always check the 511 APP and local webcams. Conditions across the state can be drastically different.

I-80:

- The Summit (Between Laramie and Cheyenne)
- Ground blizzards, regular blizzards, and strong winds are common

Wolcott Junction (Between Laramie and Rawlins):

- Strong Winds and Slippery Conditions are common

U.S. 287 South to Fort Collins:

- Slippery conditions commonly occur

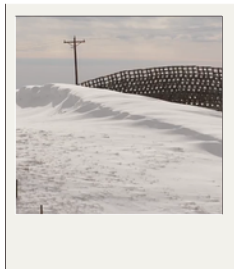
WYO 487 (Between Medicine Bow and Casper):

- Slippery conditions and strong winds are common.



Snow Fences

WHAT ARE THEY AND WHY DO THEY PROTECT THE ROAD?



WYDOT uses more than 450 miles of living and structure fences in efforts to keep roads open and traveling public safe!



- Blowing snow is caused when wind picks up snow deposited during a storm and relocates it. These particles will stay suspended in the air until the wind encounters something to slow it down. This “something” that WYDOT uses is the snow fence.
- The physics behind the placement of snow fences means it can take anywhere from a month or a few years of research to determine the optimal location of a snow fence.
- If a snow fence is placed too close to the roadway, drifts will build onto the roadway surface.
- If a snow fence is placed too far from the roadway, it fails to serve its purpose. Snow fences are highly effective, being a low-cost mitigation method to preventing blowing snow related accidents.
- The first snow fence in Wyoming appeared in 1971 on I-80. Since then, I-80 has become home to the highest concentration of snow fences in the state.



GETTING YOUR CAR READY

Before driving, make sure your car is warmed up and running smoothly.

Be prepared for anything that you could encounter on the roads.

Test your car battery, cold weather kills weak batteries.

Since air pressure drops in the cold, keep your tires at the recommended PSI.

- Check your brakes
- Replace old windshield wiper blades
- Make sure windshield cleaning fluid has antifreeze
- Fill up your tank regularly
- Check the lights and turn signals. Make sure all lights are free of ice and snow
- Clean snow off of your shoes before entering the vehicle. Snow on your shoes can make your accelerator and brake pedals slipper, creating a safety hazard



WHAT TO KEEP IN YOUR CAR

Emergency Kit

Its a good idea to keep these items so you can be prepared for anything that happens on the roads.

Warmth: Blankets, Extra Clothing, Gloves, Hand warmers

Visibility Tools: Ice Scraper, Snow Brush, Flashlight, Shovel

For Roadside Emergencies: Jumper Cables, Traction Aids, Flares

Extras: Non perishable food items: energy bars, nuts, high caloric snacks. Cellphone charger or Portable power bank, paper maps



WYOMING CHAIN LAW



Wyoming Chain Law includes two levels of restriction that can be implemented on specific highway sections when conditions warrant.



- **Level one (Hazardous conditions)**

- Travel is restricted to:
- Vehicles equipped with tire chains
- Vehicles with adequate snow tires
- All-wheel-drive vehicles
- Necessary emergency vehicles

- **Level two (extremely hazardous)**

- Travel can be restricted to
- Vehicles equipped with tire chains
- All-wheel-drive vehicles equipped with adequate mud and snow/all-weather rated tires
- Necessary emergency vehicles and snowplows

Penalties for violations:

- \$250 for violating the travel restriction
- \$750 for a violation that results in a road closure

WHILE ON THE ROAD

HOW TO DRIVE ON ICE AND SNOW

- Use low beams when driving through blowing snow
- Be alert for ice and snow on the road, particularly bridges, overpasses, and in shaded areas.
- Be on the lookout for black ice. Black ice is invisible on the road, so always be watching for sudden changes in road=surface conditions.
- Increase your following distance to at least four seconds between you and the vehicle in front of you.



Be Careful



- If you begin to skid, gently turn into the skid and ease your foot off the accelerator until you regain control.
- Locked wheels/skids can result from jamming on conventional brakes. Pumping these brakes is often required to stop safely and smoothly in slippery conditions

Note, some cars have anti-lock brakes, so they will do the pumping automatically. If so, steady pressure on the brake pedal will bring your vehicle to the quickest stop.

SO YOU'RE STUCK

HERE'S WHAT TO DO:

If stuck in a ground blizzard, slow down, but keep moving. Don't panic. Don't do anything quickly. Steering/braking should be gentle and gradual.

If you need to stop in a ground blizzard, make sure you're well off the road to avoid being hit.

If you get your vehicle stuck in snow, stay calm. Your first step is to turn off traction control, clear the snow using your shovel or hand around the driving wheels and exhaust pipe. Straighten the wheels to create the most direct path for the tires to grip. Here are some techniques that can get your vehicle unstuck.



Rocking the vehicle

Gently shift between drive and reverse, moving a little forward and backwards each time. However, be careful not to spin the wheels too fast. This can dig the wheels deeper into the snow and create a slicker surface.

Apply gentle acceleration.

Once you get your wheels clear of snow and straight, press the gas pedal gently. Again, avoid spinning the wheels too fast.



SO YOU'RE STUCK HERE'S WHAT TO DO: CONTINUED



Again, before getting on the road, it is always important to check road conditions and be prepared! You can always use the 511 app to check road conditions, dial 511 if in the state, or call 888-WYO-ROAD if you are outside the state.

Using traction aids

You can place traction aids such as sand, kitty litter, or salt in front of the drive wheels.

You can also place a car mat, piece of cardboard, or a plank of wood under the tire's path to create more traction

Letting some air out of the tires
This method should only be used as a method of the last resort. Letting out a small amount of air from the tires can increase the surface area and increase traction. Do this with caution and make sure you have a way to reflate them later.

Get Professional Help

If you are simply unable to get your car unstuck from the snow after trying the previous methods, you can call for help. If you are in immediate danger, such as from hypothermia or frost bite, call 911. If not, you can call roadside assistance if you have it, such as from AAA or your insurance, or a local towing company.

DISTRACTED **DRIVING**

Distracted Driving is any activity that takes the driver's attention away from the task of safe driving.

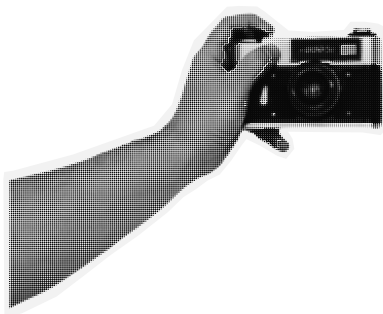
- Any non-driving activity can be a potential distraction and increase the risk of crashing
- The most common distraction suspected in crashes is in vehicle distractions, which include food, passengers, pets, and vehicle distractions.
- Try to minimize as many distractions as possible, especially when driving in slick conditions.



THE FACTS

In Wyoming, during 2020-2024, **4,452** crashes were reported as suspected distracted driving, which accounts for approximately 6.7% of all crashes.

These distracted driving crashes included 221 critical crashes, 1,024 serious crashes, and 3,207 damage crashes, resulting in 52 fatal injuries, 217 suspected serious injuries, 832 suspected minor injuries, and 633 possible injuries.



NEVER CROWD A PLOW

Give Snowplows Space

When driving around snowplows, give them space.

Snowplows create massive snow clouds that reduce visibility and create danger. Keeping a large following distance will ensure you avoid this snow cloud.

Do not pass snowplows until there is a clear line of sight. Do not pass when snowplows are active.

Watch out for tow plows! These snowplows clear both lanes at once, so be on the lookout for these, and be extra cautious when passing them.

Pull over when you see flashing lights.



SNOWPLOWS CREATE SNOW CLOUDS

Drive at a safe distance from a plow



WONDERFUL WYOMING

Winter In Laramie

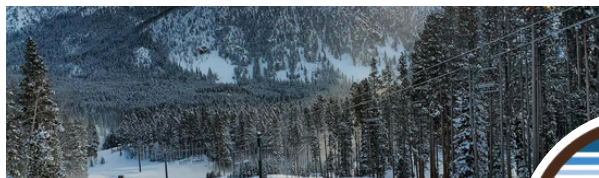
Snowy Range Ski Area

Only a 40-minute drive from Laramie, Snowy Range Ski Area is perfect for winter sports.

It is quite affordable for winter recreation, with On the Snow naming Snowy Range the most affordable ski area in the Western U.S.

Perfect for most skill levels, including beginners.

Rentals are available if you do not have ski or snowboarding gear.



Cross Country Skiing and Snowshoeing

The Happy Jack/Pole Mountain areas, just east of Laramie, are perfect for cross-country skiing and snowshoeing!

Other areas perfect for cross country skiing and snowshoeing are Chimney Park in the Medicine Bow Mountains, the Libby Creek Trail in the Medicine Bow Mountains, the Barber Lake Trail also in the Medicine Bow Mountains, and the Tie City Trailhead located in the Happy Jack/Pole Mountain Area!





WONDERFUL WYOMING

Laramie Continued

Winter Hiking

There are plenty of great hiking opportunities around Laramie during the winter! The Vedauwoo area is perfect for winter hiking, with great trails such as the Vedauwoo Trial and Turtle Rock Trial. Pilot Hill is another great area for hiking, located right outside Laramie to the west! The Happy Jack/Pole Mountain area also has plenty of good winter hikes! Before going on hikes, always make sure to check the weather and bring the right gear!



Fat Biking

Also known as snow biking, fat biking is called fat because of the big, fat tires that provide greater traction for snow covered trails. Laramie was a great area for fat biking. Great areas for snow biking are: Happy Jack Recreation Area

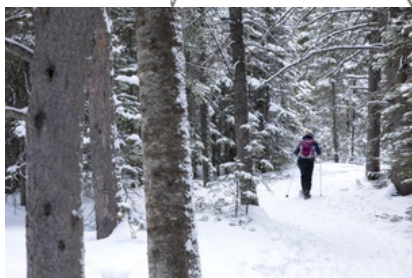
Corner Mountain
Green Rock Trailhead
Chimney Park



Laramie Continued

Ice Fishing

Curt Gowdy State Park, 30 minutes east of Laramie, has great ice fishing opportunities. All three reservoirs are great, with Granite and Crystal Reservoirs containing perch and trout, and Upper North Crow Reservoir having rainbow trout, brown trout, splake, and grayling.



University of Wyoming Outdoor Program (Half Acre)

The University of Wyoming Outdoor Program is a great way to get involved in winter recreation!

The Outdoor Program has plenty of equipment rentals for winter recreation, such as the alpine touring ski package, snowshoes, and fat tire mountain bikes!

The Outdoor Program also offers free events for students dealing with outdoor recreation!

To learn more, go to uwo.edu/rec/outdoor-program.events.htm



Laramie Museums



Laramie and the University of Wyoming offer a multitude of museums!

University of Wyoming Geological Museum

Open Monday-Saturday

10 a.m.-4p.m.

Free to the public



UW Art Museum

Open Tuesday-Saturday, 10 a.m. - 5 p.m., open until 7 p.m. Thursdays, through December 11th

This museum includes a plethora of exhibitions, as well as art by students!

The museum is free to the public!



UW Anthropology Museum

Open Monday-Friday from
8 a.m. - 5 p.m.

Free to the public

Wyoming State Territorial Prison

Explore this fascinating piece of Wyoming history.
Winter Hours: 10 a.m. - 3 p.m. Thursday-Saturday
There are admissions fees.
It is \$9 per adult.

Laramie Winter Events

Winter Lights Festival (November 29-January 31)

Hosted by Tough Guys, these holiday lights are located at Washington Park. The event includes 29 specially selected trees with light displays, 4 large light displays, and 2 tunnels of lights.

On Fridays and Saturday, local organizations and businesses sell treats and drinks before walking that path, and food trucks are also invited.



Laramie Plains Lion Club Annual Ice Fishing Derby

This event usually takes place on the first weekend of January.

There is a small registration fee.

Awards are given to the top 5 largest fish, as well as winning the smallest fish. Trophies and cash prizes are given.



CITATIONS

WYDOT Public Affairs Office, “Winter Wheelin’ in Wyoming,” WYDOT.

WYDOT Public Affairs Office, “Winter,” WYDOT Website.

<https://www.dot.state.wy.us/home/travel/winter.html>
WYDOTVIDEOS, “Driving Safely Around a Snowplow,”
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DjXB3lw0U6w>

WYDOTVIDEOS, “Know Before You Go,”
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FjhBSKuagsQ>

WYDOTVIDEOS, “Safe Winter Driving,”
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=G9hEPCerLlg>

WYDOT, “WYDOT 511 Service,”
<https://www.wygoroad.info/>

WYDOT Winter Research Services, “Importance of Snow Fence,” WYDOT,
https://www.dot.state.wy.us/home/engineering_technical_programs/field_operations/state_maintenance_office/winter_research_services.html

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WYDOT Public Affairs Office, "WYDOT Release Snowplow Tips," WYDOT, January 7, 2024.

National Weather Service, "Building an Emergency Winter Supply Kit for Car, National Weather Service," https://www.weather.gov/ilx/winter_drive2_social

National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, "Winter Weather Driving Tips," National Highway Traffic Safety Administration. <https://www.nhtsa.gov/winter-driving-tips>

Progressive, "How to get your car out of snow," Progressive. <https://www.progressive.com/answers/how-to-get-your-car-out-of-snow/>

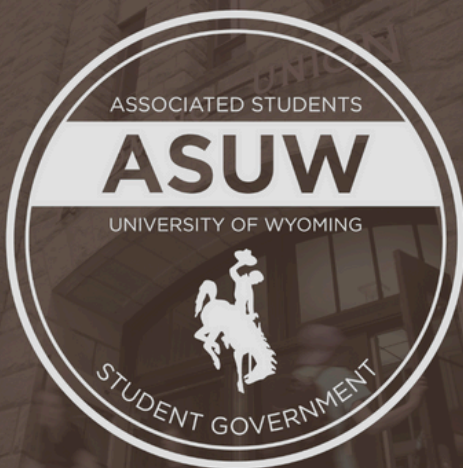
Visit Laramie, "Fishing Derby," VisitLaramie.org, <https://www.visitlaramie.org/events/annual-events-and-festivals/fishing-derby/>

Harrington, Dani and Harrington, Brian, "Top Five Winter Experiences in Laramie, Wyoming," VisitLaramie.org, March 26, 2021,



<https://www.visitlaramie.org/blog/post/top-five-winter-experiences-in-laramie-wyoming/>

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