



COLORADO

Department of Transportation

Preparing travelers for Glenwood Canyon (Fall 2020)

I-70 in Glenwood Canyon

Motorists should prepare for reduced speeds, no stopping in the canyon and safety closures due to debris flow and other weather-related events. CDOT also urges travelers to stay focused on the road and avoid distracted driving. If there is moderate, heavy or extreme rain in Glenwood Canyon over the Grizzly Creek burn scar, it is very likely there will be a debris flow, mudslides or rockfall. In order to maintain safety on I-70 in Glenwood Canyon, CDOT has a plan in place for protecting the traveling public when there could be a debris flow, mudslides or rockfall.

Safety closures

If there is a Flash Flood Watch for the Grizzly Creek burn scar, CDOT will have personnel and equipment on standby in preparation for a closure. If there is a Flash Flood Warning for the Grizzly Creek burn scar, CDOT will close I-70 in Glenwood Canyon from Exit 116 (Glenwood Springs) to 133 (Dotsero). All traffic will be affected and CDOT will immediately evacuate travelers from the canyon. During the closure, CDOT will monitor the roadway for debris flow, mudslides and rockfall. Personnel and equipment will be ready to clear the road of debris and assess damage before reopening. CDOT will reopen I-70 in Glenwood Canyon once we've confirmed it is safe for the traveling public. Note: A Flash Flood Advisory is the step between a Watch and a Warning. In the event of a Flash Flood Advisory, CDOT will be on standby in the same way as during a Flash Flood Watch.

How to plan ahead

Motorists who are planning to travel on I-70 in Glenwood Canyon should pay close attention to weather forecasts. If there is rain in the forecast, be prepared for a closure on I-70 in the canyon. CDOT recommends picking an alternate route in case the canyon closes. Please refer to COtrip.org for the latest road conditions and route options. Motorists should be wary of using GPS navigation apps for searching alternate

routes, since not all platforms provide up-to-date information. Travelers should avoid using county or forest roads as alternate routes, as road conditions may not be favorable. CDOT also recommends that travelers bring an emergency kit, with water, snacks, a flashlight and a blanket, as mountain conditions often change suddenly in the fall season.

Driving in the canyon

Travelers are not allowed to stop in Glenwood Canyon while traveling on I-70. This is to protect the traveling public from debris flows, mudslides or rockfall in the canyon. In order to clear the canyon as quickly as possible during a closure, it is important for travelers to be in their vehicles while in the canyon. CDOT is working closely with Garfield and Eagle counties to prevent emergency search and rescue missions during a debris flow or other impacts. By keeping travelers in their cars and moving, we can better prevent search and rescue missions.

Rest areas

Rest areas in Glenwood Canyon are closed, in order to keep travelers on the road while in Glenwood Canyon (see paragraph above titled “Driving in the canyon”). Also, rest areas are located in areas that are more vulnerable to these events. CDOT will continue to monitor and assess safety in those locations. Rest areas may not reopen in 2020.

Bike path

The Glenwood Canyon bike path is closed to all users, in order to keep travelers on the road while in Glenwood Canyon (see paragraph above titled “Driving in the canyon”). The bike path will remain closed through the end of 2020, also due to damage that needs to be repaired before it can be safely reopened.

CO 82 Independence Pass

A popular alternate route is Colorado Highway 82 over Independence Pass. This is not a recommended detour due to restrictions and traffic impacts in September and October due to rockfall mitigation work. The pass is open to passenger vehicles only (cars, vans, SUVs). No commercial motor vehicles (CMVs), camper trailers, recreational or similar vehicles will be allowed and a 35-foot length restriction continues to be in place (year round). Independence Pass shows as closed on navigation apps in order to prevent commercial traffic from being routed over the pass. All road conditions and closures are posted in real time at COtrip.org. Motorists should expect slow speeds, lengthy travel times and potential delays of up to two hours. Due to rockfall mitigation work, there will be daytime, weekday lane closures

with alternating traffic between Mile Points 59 to 62. There will be a few days of full closures of CO 82 on Independence Pass in late September and early to mid-October, due to rockfall mitigation. Travelers should be aware that Independence Pass on Colorado Highway 82 is subject to closures due to inclement weather and is closed in the winter.