

OUR VIEW: Common sense needed with studded tire laws

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We've always been fans of common sense, so warnings reminding Washington drivers that they must remove their snow tires by today even though there's plenty of snow on the ground seemed silly.

Heavy snow fell in the Cascades over the weekend, and the rolling roads of the Palouse were slick and dangerous Sunday morning because of snow, ice and wind. In fact, there was a 10-mile stretch of U.S. Highway 195 south of Pullman that was closed for three hours because of jackknifed trucks and cars sliding off the road.

Snow fell off and on all day in Moscow on Tuesday, and there's a forecast of rain and snow showers through Friday. It just makes sense to keep those studded tires on.

State Patrol Chief John R. Batiste warned that the sound of studs grinding on pavement makes it easy to enforce the ban because it's "the sound of damage being done to our roads."

We agree it's important to keep damage to our roads at a minimum. Road improvements are expensive, and when the state is trying to do all it can to keep the budget down, the thought of repairing roads that were damaged because of studded tires seems ridiculous. However, sliding all over the road, into oncoming traffic or off into the ditch is more than ridiculous.

State Patrol Trooper Michael Murphy said the fine for driving with studded tires is \$124. He said most officers likely will be lenient and just offer warnings for the first couple of days, largely because of the weather. He also said that studded tires only help out 10 percent of the time.

Great. "Most" and "likely" and "10 percent" don't do much to ease worries that drivers will be forced to choose between being safe and keeping the much-needed \$124 in the bank.

- **Sandra Kelly**, for the editorial board