

Frequently Asked Questions:

Written by and for members of Offroading Subarus of Colorado (O.S.CO) and all other offroad Subaru enthusiasts.

Thank you for taking the time to browse O.S.CO's list of FAQs. If you have any suggestions at all on changes, questions to add, or have a more detailed question that may not have been completely answered here, please feel free to ask one of us in O.S.CO for assistance.

For more useful information, please visit [Offroading Subarus of Colorado's Website](#)

1) “I’m new to offroading, are there rules?”

Fortunately, there are rules, guidelines, and laws regarding offroading. Multiple organizations have been formed over the years to help spread awareness of some of the common misconceptions and mistakes people make when offroading.

In general, we as an offroading community need to do our best to preserve and protect the land we use.

Some of these guidelines include: sticking to designated and marked trails (or areas for OHV parks), abiding by seasonal trail closures, abiding by closed areas, NOT bypassing closed gates, obtaining Off-Highway Vehicle Permits where necessary, camping only where allowed, among other things you can find at the resources below. Among other “unspoken” rules such as using only as much momentum as necessary to get through water crossings, mud, etc. to minimize splashing, which widens and deepens the trail, disturbed surrounding vegetation, and eventually creating a large, deep, and long mud hole.

Failure to follow these rules, guidelines, and laws gives more ammunition to the “anti-offroaders” to shut down your local trails, national forests, and OHV parks for offroad use.

It is everyone’s responsibility to teach others as best we can about these guidelines, in order to help people understand why it is so important.

Some of these resources include:

- Your local Ranger station, Forest Service, or Parks and Wildlife offices
- [Stay The Trail](#)
- [Tread Lightly!](#)
- [Leave No Trace](#)
- [Trails Offroad](#)
- [BLM Land Management](#)
- [San Juan Jeep Trail Status](#)

- Your local 4x4 Guide or Recovery service if available may also be able to help

NEVER go alone unless you are prepared for a long, cold, lonely night in the woods. If you do decide to venture out alone, PLEASE tell someone where you're going, when you expect to be back, what gear you're taking with you, etc. ALWAYS bring at the very least a shovel, food, water, and warm clothing. Be prepared for the worst, to walk out to a road or until you get a cell signal to call for help. O.S.CO **DOES NOT** recommend venturing out alone unless you are VERY familiar with the trail, current conditions, and are adequately prepared. In the wintertime, trail conditions can change by the hour, and you can get stuck very easily.

2) “I want to offroad my Subaru, what mods should I do and how much does it cost?”

The basic offroad-oriented Subaru has a 2 inch lift, better tires, skid plates, a hitch, and a full size spare tire.

Most of the time, all-in-all, a basic “typical” offroad-oriented Subaru would cost roughly \$2300 in parts (if you install yourself). All of these items have many (or at least a few) options for brands, materials, design, etc; meaning this price can vary depending on your brand choices, DIYing ability, installation costs, etc.

There are other modifications that can improve your capability and performance, including but not limited to; more lift, drivetrain changes (manual to automatic swap, high-stall torque converter, etc), power adders (turbo, supercharger, etc), extra cooling (oil cooler, ATF cooler, larger radiator, etc), rock sliders, aftermarket bumpers, winches, the list goes on. Most of this again depends on your DIYing abilities, resources, and/or money situation.

Just because you DON'T have these other items, most of the time does not mean you can't or won't go as far vs the “basic” setup listed above.

3) “What lift company should I buy from?”

This question becomes quite controversial whenever it is asked, as every customer of almost every major Subaru lift kit manufacturer has had both good and bad experiences. This question is mainly based on personal opinions and preferences.

We at O.S.CO recommend SubieLiftOz (SLO) kits from Australia, due to Matt Chaplin's customer service, quality of parts, and very quick turnaround times. Paired with standard height springs, this combination provides a very comfortable ride with improved ground clearance and load handling for your gear.

Other manufacturers include but are not limited to; LP Adventure, Anderson Design & Fabrication (ADF), Subtle Solutions, Rallitek, SubieFish, BoostFactory, and Subiworks.

4) “What size tires can I fit on “___” car with “___” lift and “___” wheels?”

Most Subarus have a maximum recommended size of 235/75r15 (or ~29x9.5). With the proper offset wheels, this size should clear the spring perch on almost every Forester and Outback lifted or stock. Some hammering/trimming will be needed for tire clearance depending on your year and amount of lift. Please refer to [Rallitek's Tire size chart](#) for more examples for your specific Subaru:

(We are currently working on our own version of this chart)

5) “What do you use to communicate when on the trail?”

The type of communication used will vary depending on your group and what they prefer.

We like to use two-way walkie talkies to communicate. These are cheap, easy to find, as well as free and easy to use. (Don't worry, many of us carry many spare radios for those who may not have one).

Some of us have our Amateur Radio License through the FCC, so some local simplex frequencies and/or repeaters are sometimes used for longer-distance communications. Another option that is not as common with O.S.CO is CB's.

6) “Why wasn't I invited to “___” run?”

Especially here in Colorado, winter can make easy trails unpredictable and difficult to traverse and navigate. For this reason, most wintertime trail runs are limited to about 5-10 Subaru's maximum. Lift, tires, skid plates, and proper recovery gear are necessary most of the season for our safety and yours.

Please understand this does not mean you are not welcomed, it simply means we decided to limit the risk to other vehicles and people by selecting who gets to attend. This helps the day move faster and with fewer hiccups most of the time.

This thought process also applies to more difficult trails during other seasons.

7) “What should I carry in my car and bring for trail runs?”

Please reference REI's ["10 Essentials" list](#) for more ideas:

We recommend the following at a *bare minimum* for most trail runs, no matter the time of year:

- A smile and a positive attitude
- A basic first aid kit including any medication (Insulin, Inhalers, etc; whatever meds you may need away from home)
- At least 1 ABC fire extinguisher easily accessible
- Basic car kit (tire iron, jumper cables, etc)
- Food and drink for lunch, and extra food and snacks for the day/night for yourself and any passengers (don't forget your pets!)
- Flashlight, lantern, headlamps, etc
- Walkie talkies with spare batteries and/or charger
- A tool kit consisting of basic hand tools (sockets, screwdrivers, wrenches, zip ties, hose clamps, torque wrench, etc)
- Jack with supporting base if necessary (for lifted Subarus, a couple of blocks of wood and the factory scissor jack should suffice in most cases)
- Weather-appropriate clothing, including but not limited to; warm clothes, extra socks, warm and waterproof shoes, extra shoes/boots if possible, hats/beanies, gloves, raincoat, sweatshirt, winter coat (as needed), snow pants (as needed), sunscreen, bug spray, etc.
- A warm blanket for you and any passengers
- A full-size spare tire (same brand, size, and tread wear if at all possible to reduce potential damage to AWD system)

Highly Recommended Gear To Add:

- 72 hr pack with basic survival supplies for yourself and any passengers
- Offline maps downloaded to your phone using Avenza Maps or other offline GPS maps app. (Paper maps and a compass are always recommended as well)
- Another communication device with charger and/or extra batteries (CB, Ham radio, etc)
- Satellite Messenger/GPS (Garmin InReach, SpotX, etc)
- Tire-Deflator and a means of airing up. (Compressor, CO2 bottle, etc)
- Recovery gear suited to your vehicle. This includes at a minimum the following:
 - A solid recovery point (Receiver hitch is the easiest and cheapest for most of us, the stock screw-in tow eye if available can work in a pinch, although it is strongly not recommended for hard snatch recoveries)
 - MaxTrax or other traction boards
 - 20 to 30 ft long tow strap (no stretch)
 - 20 to 30 ft long recovery strap (2-3 times the GVWR of your vehicle or ~17k max -- These stretch to reduce the shock load on recovery points and your vehicle)
 - 15+ ft long "tree saver" strap (for bridling between points if necessary)

- (4) or more 3/4 inch rated hard shackles and/or (4) or more rated soft shackles
- Spare fluids (oil, coolant, power steering fluid/ATF, brake fluid, etc)
- Spare parts: At least (1) tie-rod end, at least (1) inner tie rod, (1) front CV axle, (1) rear CV axle, (4+) lug nuts, (4+) wheel studs
- Tire-repair kit
- Colby emergency valve stems
- Shovel(s)

A current *draft* version of a list of suggested items via Amazon.com can be found here: <http://a.co/9iqjZOS>

8) “How do you know what trails a Subaru can go on?”

We use TrailsOffroad.com to get an idea of the difficulty of the trail we are interested in. In general, most stock Subarus can attend most trails rated 4 and below. Most modified (lifted, protected, proper tires, experience) can attend some trails rated up to 6 or higher. This can also differ depending on your specific vehicle (Manual transmission and CVT's, in particular, tend to have difficulties on more technical, difficult trails).

Obviously, trails change during different seasons and weather, varying the difficulty. We are currently working on our own list of “Subaru Rated” trails throughout Colorado, with our own rating system, notes, pictures, and other useful information. We will also soon be starting trail scouting missions for more difficult and new trails.

9) “What are some trails I can take my Subaru on in Colorado?”

****Please only go on trails AT YOUR OWN RISK, WITH ANOTHER VEHICLE, and follow the designated trail. We **DO NOT** guarantee a trail is doable in your vehicle, and we are **NOT** responsible for damage to your vehicle or other property.****

If you do decide to venture out alone, PLEASE tell someone where you're going, when you expect to be back, what gear you're taking with you, etc. ALWAYS bring at the very least a shovel, food, water, and warm clothing. Be prepared for the worst, to walk out to a road or until you get a cell signal to call for help. O.S.CO **DOES NOT** recommend venturing out alone unless you are VERY familiar with the trail, current conditions, and are adequately prepared.

Going alone (even prepared) is never a good idea in the wintertime, as even easy trails described below can have feet of deep snow on them at anytime.

O.S.CO currently has a small list of “easy” trails most “naturally taller” (Forester,

Outback, Crosstrek, Baja, etc) Subarus should be able to go on (with lots of caution and at your own risk) stock most of the year with minimal issues. This list will grow with time, and will eventually be its own page.

Some of these (Central to Denver/Boulder for the time being, please ask in the group for your specific area, as we have members all over the state) include:

- Switzerland Trail near Nederland, CO. This trail should be easily doable at stock height 98% of the year, with the only exception after heavy snowfall in the area
- Rollins Pass East near Rollinsville, CO. This is a fairly long easy trail that should be doable with minimal issues at stock height for the large majority of the trail, and all year except winter, as snow on the trail can be very deep and soft until mid-May at times.
- Corona Pass (Rollins Pass West) near Winter Park, CO. This is another fairly long, easy trail. Same explanation as Rollins Pass East.
- Argentine Pass near Georgetown, CO. Besides the “gatekeeper” entrance, this trail is fairly smooth, while a bit long, can be doable stock height until the mine during the summer months.

10) “What should I check on my car before a meet?”

It is always a good idea to keep an eye on your vehicle. Inspections in general, are a great way to catch problems before they happen and to keep your vehicle in top performing and safe shape. We recommend checking the following before a meet, as well as regular intervals for general care of your Subaru:

- Oil and Coolant levels: check and top off as necessary, find and fix leaks as necessary
- Tire condition: tread depth, cracks, damage, pressure
- Wheels: damage (cracks, bends)
- Lug nuts: proper torque
- Lights: proper operation
- Aftermarket accessories (skid plates, light bars, bumpers, etc): all bolts/nuts in place and tight, accessory properly mounted

● 11) “Should I air down? When and how much?”

Airing down is a great idea! A lot of factors come into play when airing down, including terrain, weather, tire size, type of tire, load rating of tire, wheel type, more aggressive bead seats or beadlocks, etc.

As a general rule, don’t air down past 6-8psi at the very lowest (for sand, deep snow, etc) on non-beadlock wheels, and be very careful on turns, as the chances of rolling a bead and debanding the tire are increased.

Otherwise, for the following types of terrains, generally these are good numbers for comfort, increased traction, and saving sidewall punctures. These can vary slightly if you have stiffer tires (air down slightly more), more weight (don't air down quite as much), and other variables:

- Gravel or dirt road:
 - Street pressure (30 to 36psi, 40psi if very heavy)
- Rocky or rutted road or trail:
 - 22-25psi
- Very aggressive rocky or rutted trail:
 - 16-22psi
- Deep sand, snow, etc:
 - 8psi at the lowest, 10-16psi