

MOUNTAIN ROADS

When do mountain roads open?

On what factors does their opening depend?

How do I know which mountain roads are open?



ENVIRONMENT AGENCY OF ICELAND



ROAD AND COASTAL ADMINISTRATION

2016

Travel in the highlands of Iceland has increased considerably in recent years; this reflects an increase in leisure time, improvements in vehicles for rough-country travel, and awakening interest in year-round travel.

SENSITIVE ENVIRONMENT

Land which is more than 300 meters above sea level is classified as highland; the climate in the highlands is changeable, and these regions are generally blanketed with snow well into the summer months.

During the spring and early summer, when the snow melts and frozen earth thaws both roads and vegetation are in a vulnerable state and easily damaged. The greatest risk is due to the impact of premature traffic, especially when vehicles drive off-road to circumvent snowdrifts. Attempts to use snowmobiles in spring, when snow-cover is decreasing, can also inflict damage.

The highland summer lasts only a month and a half, and this is the period of growth for highland vegetation,

which is thus low-growing and sensitive to any disturbance. Even walkers can inflict permanent damage on vegetation. So all travelers in the highlands should treat the natural environment with care and respect.

OPENING OF MOUNTAIN ROADS

The state of snow cover is the most important factor on deciding when



mountain roads can be opened to traffic. Roads are often very wet following the spring melt, and this can also lead to roads remaining closed to traffic.

In cases where mountain roads pass through conservation areas, the roads

may not be opened until the area as a whole is in a state to withstand the pressures of visitors, even if the road itself is clear of snow and could withstand traffic.

MOUNTAIN ROAD CONDITIONS

Since 1989, the Public Roads Administration and the Environmental and Food Agency have published maps showing the condition of mountain roads during the spring and early summer. The maps are issued for as long as any mountain road remains closed. <http://www.road.is> Up-to-date information on the state of the roads, including mountain roads, is available on telephone 1777.

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OPENING OF MOUNTAIN ROADS

Information on the approximate opening date of the principal mountain roads is given in the table; the map below shows the locations of mountain roads.

The first two columns of the table show the earliest and latest opening dates of the roads over the past 5 years. The third column shows the average date of opening during this period.

The road may not, in practice, be opened on the projected date, as the question whether a road has become passable is subject to weather conditions and the amount of snow in the highlands. More detailed information on the opening of highland roads can be found in maps issued by the Public Roads Administration and the Environmental and Food Agency during the spring and early summer, and published in the press. Further information on the state of the roads is also available on telephone 1777.

MOUNTAIN ROADS 2009 - 2013	Opening date earliest	Opening date latest	Opening date median
Lakagígar, F206	05.06	09.07	22.06
Fjallabaksleið nyrðri, F208			
1. Sigalda - Landmannalaugar	31.05	29.06	17.06
2. Laugar - Eldgjá	07.06	17.07	17.06
3. Eldgjá - Skaftártunga	07.06	26.06	13.06
Fjallabaksleið syðri F210			
1. Keldur - Hvanngil	12.06	17.07	03.07
2. Hvanngil - Skaftártunga	12.06	23.07	02.07
Landmannaleið (Dómad.) F225	07.06	05.07	22.06
Emstruleið, F261	12.06	10.07	26.06
Kjalvegur, 35			
1. Gullfoss - Hveravellir	05.06	01.07	18.06
2. Hveravellir - Blönduvirkjun	05.06	25.06	14.06
Sprengisandur, F26			
1. Hrauneyjar - Nýidalur	15.06	10.07	28.06
2. Nýidalur - Bárðardalur	03.07	13.07	07.07
Skagafjarðarleið, F752	03.07	16.07	08.07
Eyjafjarðarleið, F821	04.07	24.07	13.07
Öskjuleið, F88			
1. Inn að Herðubreiðarlindum	14.06	26.06	21.06
2. Herðubreiðarlindir - Dreki	15.06	26.06	21.06
Öskjuvatnsvegur, F894	15.06	24.07	11.07
Vesturd. (Hljóðaklettur), F862	06.05	24.06	06.06
Kverkfjalaleið, F902	14.06	27.06	23.06
Uxahryggjavegur, 52	24.04	31.05	09.05
Kaldadalsvegur, 550	05.06	07.07	17.06

