



THE RUBBER ASSOCIATION OF CANADA
ASSOCIATION CANADIENNE DE
L'INDUSTRIE DU CAOUTCHOUC

COMMUNIQUE

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All-Season versus Winter Tires - It's entirely up to you!

Is this the year you make the switch from all-season to winter tires? If you haven't done so by now, it may already be too late as inventories of winter tires are depleting rapidly as a result of heavy snowfall in early November.

A recent study conducted by The Canadian Press and Leger Marketing paints an interesting picture of winter tire usage across the country: Québec has the highest usage at 84%, followed by Eastern Canada at 57%. Surprisingly, only 29% of Ontario drivers make use of winter tires. It may be just a coincidence, but in Ontario 26% of winter accidents are attributed to the absence of winter tires, according to respondents from the Leger study. British Columbia is next at 28%, followed by Alberta at 22% and only 10% winter tire usage in the Prairie provinces.

While still only 42% of Canadians use winter tires, the trend is unmistakable: more and more people are switching to winter tires. Why you ask? For an analogy, think street hockey: ask any goaltender the difference between stopping a blistering slap shot of a rubber ball with his thigh in the middle of summer, and stopping that same ball in mid-February. Rubber, whether a ball or a tire tends to harden in cold weather, but these new generation winter tires maintain their elasticity and gripping power at -35^oC and below, whereas traditional all-season tires tend to stiffen and lose gripping power at around 0^oC.

This improved gripping power at lower operating temperatures has tangible benefits. A recent Transports Québec and Promutuel study showed that winter tires reduce your stopping distance by up to 25% or between 2 to 3 car-lengths. That could well be the difference between worry free stopping or a fender-bender, or worse. And when you consider that even a fender bender may cost you your insurance deductible, it's easy to see why more and more consumers are switching to winter tires.

If winter tires offer such improved cold weather performance, why don't tire manufacturers make all season tires with the same compounds? Because there is a trade-off: the softer, more pliant winter tread will tend to wear more quickly than an all-season tire. This is why consumers need to understand their own driving habits and choose the best alternative for themselves.

Think you can skimp by purchasing only two winter tires? After all, isn't that what your parents used to do? The answer is an emphatic "No"! In fact, putting only two winter tires on a vehicle can change the vehicle's handling so much as to be unsafe. Many tire retailers will refuse to install only two winter tires for that very reason. A check at Transport Canada website on road safety says, "*To help maintain control and stability of*

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your vehicle in icy conditions, Transport Canada and the Rubber Association of Canada recommend that you install winter tires in sets of four."

Remember even with quality winter tires you must always drive according to the conditions of the roads and maintain more distance from other vehicles. For more information and specific tire maintenance tips please visit www.betiresmart.ca. It's entirely up to you so Be Tire Smart and Play your P.A.R.T.

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