

FPinfomart Alert for: **Be Tire Smart**

## **Take winter driving seriously and be tire smart with these tips; winter driving tips**

Waterloo Region Record

Fri 13 Feb 2009

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Section: Wheels

When it comes to winter driving, more Canadian drivers than ever are making the smart choice and installing winter tires.

Tire makers shipped a whopping 10 million winter tires to Canadian tire retailers in 2008, up by one third over 2007.

This huge jump in winter tire shipments is partly due to Quebec's new law requiring motorists there to use winter tires, but drivers in other regions are also turning to winter tires in record numbers.

In Ontario, for example, tire makers shipped an additional 650,000 passenger and light truck winter tires to retailers and shipments were also up sharply in Western and Atlantic Canada.

All tire rubber will begin to stiffen as the weather gets colder, but today's winter tires maintain their elasticity even at extremely low temperatures approaching minus 30 degrees Celsius.

The result is significantly better traction and handling whether the roadway is snowy, icy, slush covered or dry.

Modern winter tires offer up to 50 per cent more winter traction than all-season tires, which translates to shorter stopping distances and better vehicle cornering and control.

Canada's tire makers also strongly advise motorists to use winter tires on all wheel positions.

Using winter tires on the front or rear wheel positions only can create a serious traction imbalance that can lead to a loss of control, particularly when cornering.

Motorists can identify a true winter tire by looking for the mountain snowflake symbol on the sidewall. Tires stamped with this distinctive symbol meet or exceed specific snow traction requirements established by the tire industry.

Another smart choice for winter driving is to look well down the road, slow down and anticipate what other drivers around you are going to do.

It can take a vehicle up to twice as long, or longer, to stop on a slippery road surface as it does on a dry road, so it pays to stay well back from the car or truck in front of your vehicle to avoid having to stop suddenly. When braking, the best approach to avoid skidding is a few soft taps rather than one hard push.

Proper tire inflation is another priority for the well-informed winter driver. Tires that are under-or-over inflated have a smaller footprint on the road surface, which weakens their grip.

The result is reduced stopping and handling capabilities. Under-inflated tires also waste fuel due to increased rolling resistance.

The Rubber Association of Canada (RAC) recommends that drivers should use a reliable tire gauge to measure their tire pressure monthly to ensure their tires are always inflated to the vehicle manufacturer's recommendation.

Drivers should also check to ensure their tires are not overly worn, as excessive tread wear can diminish traction.

Drivers can learn more about winter tires and proper tire maintenance by visiting the RAC's [Be Tire Smart](#) website [BeTireSmart.ca](#).

#### Winter tire check list

Whether you live in the city or country, or whether you drive a big or small vehicle, winter driving conditions will impact your vehicle's performance.

When deciding whether to install winter tires, ask yourself the following questions:

Do you live where cold temperatures are common?

Do you drive on icy or snowy roads?

Do you have to use your vehicle everyday, regardless of the weather?

Do you drive off main streets and roads in winter?

Do you drive early in the morning or late at night in winter?

Do you drive nearly the same speed regardless of the temperature?

If you answered yes to one or more of these questions, winter tires may be right for you. Talk to your tire dealer about your driving habits and what kind of conditions you drive in and what kinds of winter tires are best suited for you.

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Idnumber: 200902130086

Edition: Final

Story Type: NEWS

Length: 617 words

Tone: Positive ■

Ad Value: \$2,837.45 ■

Circulation: 66,010 ■