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Getting An Edge On Wet Roads

By News Canada

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by: **News Canada**

(NC)—There's probably no worse feeling. You're driving on a wet stretch of road and all of a sudden it feels as though your vehicle has a mind of its own. Of course, your vehicle isn't possessed; it has "caught a wave." You're hydroplaning - your tires are no longer in direct contact with the road as they are riding on top of the water that has pooled on the road.

Hydroplaning can occur when a combination of speed, tire wear, tire inflation or the depth of water on the pavement causes the tires to lose traction. Essentially, a layer of water creates a barrier between the road and your tires. This barrier can cause you to lose traction and glide or hydroplane across the water's surface.

In wet weather, the tires that have been properly maintained and are in good running condition can cut through the water and maintain contact with the pavement at speeds less than 50 km/h. In cases where the tires are excessively worn (bald tires) or underinflated, or the water is very deep, you may still hydroplane at slower speeds.

At higher speeds (70 km/h and higher), the wedge of water in front of the tires may pass under the tires and the tires will ride on a cushion of water - resulting in a possible complete loss of traction.

Tire manufacturers are continually working to produce tires that give you an edge in wet conditions. HydroEdge™, Michelin's latest ultra-premium (mass-market) tire offers superior performance on dry or wet surfaces as well as exceptional hydroplaning resistance.

"The all-season tire HydroEdge features dual center grooves that are not exposed to the sipes or other water execution mechanisms," explains Tony Mougios, Michelin Brand Manager for Canada. "This means that these tires can evacuate water very quickly. Specially angled HydroChutes also reduce the water flow turbulence for excellent overall wet weather performance."

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Along with purchasing tires that offer hydroplaning resistance like HydroEdge, Michelin offers the following tips for preventing and/or dealing with hydroplaning.

To prevent hydroplaning: Check your tires and tire inflation regularly Reduce your speed even more when approaching still water and puddles Drive in the tracks of preceding vehicles

Should your vehicle hydroplane: Shift to neutral (on a standard transmission, depress the clutch) Activate the hazard lights Grip the steering wheel firmly and steer where you want to go Avoid braking or accelerating Check your rear view mirror

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Snow Tires - A Canadian Must Have

By Tyson J Stevenson

A tire or tyre is a covering provided on the circumference of wheels of vehicles. The functions of tires is to dampen oscillations due to uneven surface of the road, to prevent wear and tear of the wheel, to provide a high friction bond between the vehicle and the road for proper acceleration and handling of the vehicle. They are usually made of synthetic rubber.

Snow tires are special tires designed to run on snow, ice, wet roads, sleet, slippery roads and mud. They have better traction and handling properties. Snow tires differ from regular tires in the following ways:

Hardness. They are made up of softer rubber, which heats up quicker. The softness and hardness of tire rubber depends upon the amount of carbon black in it. For summer tires, the amount of carbon

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black is more and for snow tires the amount of carbon black in the rubber is less. Rubber becomes brittle at lower temperatures hence summer tires are not suitable to be used in winters.

Treading. The crown or the outer perimeter of tires has jagged pattern on it known as tread. The function of tread is to provide grip during rain or snow. The summer tires have smaller tread on them. The snow and mud tires have larger tread blocks on them hence they are noisier.

Sipes. Sipes are small slits provided on the sides of tires to provide flexibility to tread blocks on the tyre. The function of sipes is to disperse water and snow. They improve traction by providing an additional biting edge to the tyre and are helpful on ice, snow, mud and sand.

Grooves. Grooves are voids on the tires designed to facilitate dispelling of water or snow. Deeper grooves provide better handling and control of the vehicle in snow.

Void Ratio. Void ratio is related to the amount of rubber coming in contact with the road. It is defined by the voids or open spaces on the tyre. A high void ratio accelerates the potentiality to drain water. For snow tires a high void ratio is required.

Aquaplaning. One of the functions of tires is to remove water from the treads on wet roads. When the tire rotates, the treads push water into grooves and sipes, from where the water is pushed out. If the water does not go out properly then the vehicle slides which may cause accidents. This sliding of the tire on water is called aquaplaning. Hence the depth and pattern of treads is very important.

Metal studs. Most snow tires have metal studs fabricated in the tread. This provides better grip on snow and ice. A place where the weather is extreme, the law makes it mandatory to use snow tires. However snow tires are extremely noisy and wear out fast on dry roads. Further, they wear out the road also.

Markings on Snow Tires. The tires designed for Mud and snow are marked with M&S. the icon of mountain and snow flake designates that the tire meets snow testing standards of American Society for Testing and Materials. It mandates that snow tires should have a traction index of more than 110.

Tyson J Stevenson writes on a wide variety of "every day" subjects, always with valuable news &

reviews. Expect to see his name often. A related resource is

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