

# Winter Tires

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## **Q. Do I need winter tires?**

A. If you live in an area where the temperature is consistently below 45\*, yes you do. Winter tires have a special rubber compound designed to improve traction, handling, and braking in the cold weather conditions, not just ice and snow.

## **Q. How many winter tires are required to put on a vehicle?**

A. This is the most frequently asked question. This is the same answer whether you drive a car, truck or SUV. You should always put a full set of 4 winter tires on at once.

## **Q. Why four winter tires?**

A. Many people assume that the two drive tires on a two-wheeled drive vehicle are more important and the other two tires sort of tag along. This idea was valid twenty or more years ago when snow tires were different in only their tread design. Today's winter tires have different compounds that are designed to deliver 25% to 50% more traction in the snow and ice, and stay pliable to cold weather allowing for more control on dry roads. Using just two on a vehicle causes a mismatch that can have serious handling consequences. Using four winter tires ensures optimum traction and control for all vehicles types. It is the cheapest and safest kind of insurance you can buy to protect yourself, family, and others during the winter months.

## **Q. What can happen if I only have two winter tires on my vehicle?**

A. Using only two winter tires can cause you to lose control of ANY vehicle. Here's why:

- Front Wheel Drive Vehicles: Even though the front wheels are responsible for steering, accelerating, and most of the braking; don't forget about the rear braking also. If the rear wheels are not equipped with winter tires also, you are essentially disabling the rear brakes due to the lack of traction.
  - Example: Say you are traveling along at 25 mph in your neighborhood in just light snow. You begin to slow to make a right turn. As you apply the brakes, your winter tires are doing their job, giving you all the traction you need to slow down. At the same time the all-season tires in the rear are giving you much less traction, causing the rear of the vehicle to slide around. Perhaps at slow speeds no harm is done, but what if you had to make an emergency move on the highway at greater speeds?
- Rear Wheel Drive Vehicles: Many people think that the winter tires on the rear will solve the acceleration problems in ice and snow. However, getting your vehicle to accelerate is only half the battle, because you still need to stop. The majority of a vehicles braking is done by the front brakes, and failing to put tires in the front can have disastrous

consequences. Also keep in mind that steering is the sole function of the front tires. With insufficient traction on the front tires, it is like not being able to firmly grasp the steering wheel.

- Example: You are traveling down the road at 45 mph on a snow, ice or even just cold pavement, and suddenly you had to brake and swerve to avoid an accident. The rear tires would grip to stop you but the front would slide and not be able to stop and turn the front of the vehicle fast enough to avoid a head on collision with the objects.
- All-Wheel Drive or 4 Wheel Drive Vehicles: During the winter you would never intentionally disconnect your four wheel drive and just use the two wheel drive instead. Yet this is exactly what you are doing if you just use two winter tires. The traction mismatch basically “disconnects” the other two wheels that are not equipped with winter tires. This leaves you open to the control problems cited in the other two sections, depending on where you mount the tires.

**Q. Do I still need winter tires, even if I have ABS and Traction Control?**

A. YES! Traction control does not create additional tire traction. ABS brakes with winter tires will improve performance on ice, snow, and cold roads.