

# 2017

## Winter Tire Report

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*Winter tires now the fastest growing  
tire category in Canada*



Tire and Rubber  
Association  
of Canada

L'Association  
canadienne du pneu  
et du caoutchouc

## *About This Report*

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TRAC's *2017 Winter Tire Report* is an information tool for government bodies, industry, media and other stakeholders such as car manufacturers, tire retailers and road safety advocacy groups. The purpose of the report is to build understanding of the value of winter tires to consumers, individuals and society.

The scope of this report applies to passenger and light truck vehicle categories only.

TRAC reviewed a broad range of market research, data and consumer perceptions related to winter tires available. TRAC analyzed the information to provide recommendations on educating Canadian motorists regarding the safety and performance benefits of winter tires.

### *About TRAC's 2017 National Survey Instrument*

A survey of 1,633 Canadians was completed online during the period of October 9–12, 2017, utilizing Leger's\* online panel, *LegerWeb*. A probability sample of the same size would yield a margin of error of +/-2.5%, 19 times out of 20.

\*Leger is the largest Canadian-owned polling, research and strategic marketing firm. Founded in 1986, Leger has gained an impressive knowledge base, and provides clients access to credible and reliable data. Leger clients include BlackBerry, Bank of Montreal, Johnson & Johnson, LG, L'Oreal, Mastercard, Merck, Microsoft, Migros, Nestle, Pfizer, Quebecor, Samsung, Staples, and Westjet.

## *Winter tires is the fastest growing tire category in Canada*

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### *Introduction*

Based on statistical analysis of winter tire shipments across Canada by members of the Tire and Rubber Association of Canada (TRAC), the winter tire category has grown at an annualized rate of 4 per cent over the past five years, thereby making winter tires the fastest growing category in the Canadian tire market.

Additionally, TRAC's 2017 Canadian Consumer Winter Tire Study showed steady usage of winter tires by Canadian motorists. The study confirms that Canadians have a positive attitude toward utilization of winter tires. Consumers continue to embrace the improved handling and safety provided by winter tires.

It is TRAC's belief that the best way to promote safe winter driving is through partnerships among government, industry, and stakeholders, to educate consumers about the safety benefits of winter tires.

Winter tires are not compulsory outside of Quebec. Many provincial bodies provide winter driving recommendations that include use of winter tires. Winter tires provide better traction, braking and handling during frost, snow, slush, and icy conditions. Installing four winter tires provides greater control and stability on the road, translating into a safer winter driving experience.

"We see a steady improvement in consumer awareness of winter tires, with over 60 per cent of Canadian drivers choosing winter tires. That also means that we still have four out of 10 drivers to reach to make our roads that much safer."

— Glenn Maidment  
President, TRAC

## *Road Safety—The Case for Winter Tires*

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The following findings are supported by a report from the Traffic Injury Research Foundation (TIRF; [www.tirf.ca](http://www.tirf.ca)) that cites a range of studies that show conclusively that winter tires provide superior traction, braking and cornering in all cold-weather driving conditions, whether the road surface is dry, wet, icy or snow-covered.

Winter tires play a measurable role in increasing road safety and protecting drivers and traffic participants. The use of winter tires contributes to:

- preventing collisions, injuries and fatalities,
- reducing health and hospital emergency costs,
- reducing the number of police and ambulance emergency responses during winter,
- lowering the frequency and size of insurance payouts,
- reducing traffic congestion.

### *Quebec—Saving Lives and Reducing Accidents*

The superior traction and braking capabilities of winter tires are proven to save lives and reduce personal injury accidents. The Quebec experience with its mandatory winter tire usage and full data represents the best example.

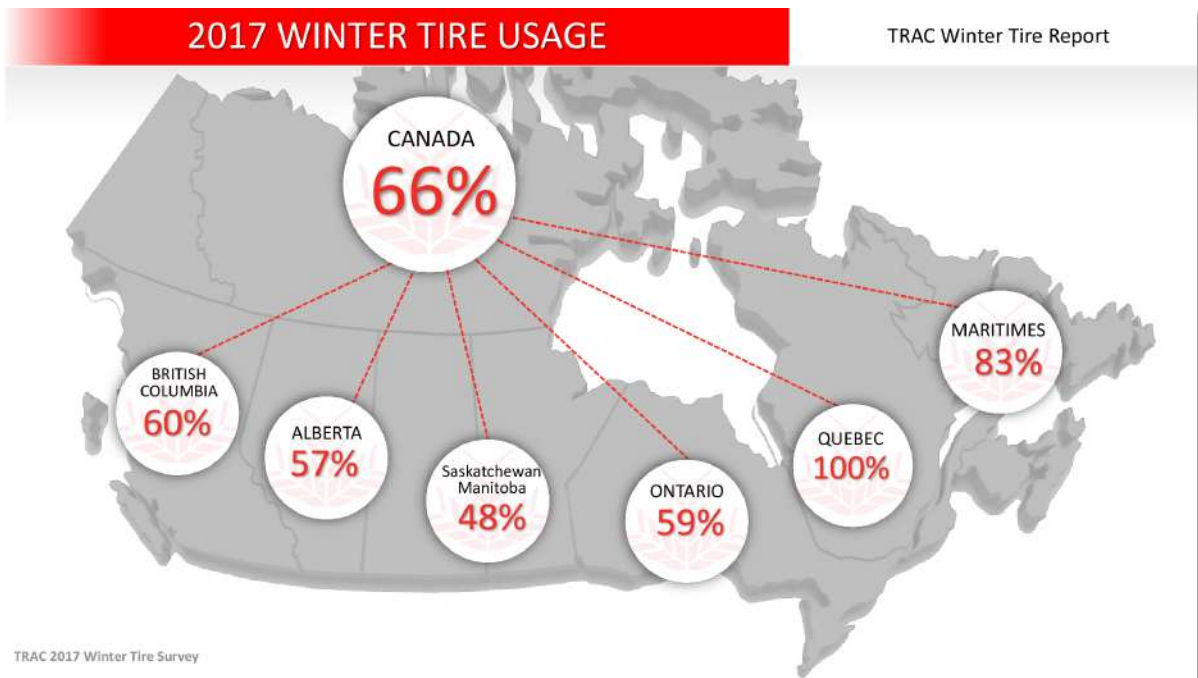
A 2011 study by the ministère des Transports du Québec demonstrates the road safety benefits of legislating winter tires. After the first two seasons of enforcement (winter 2008-2009/2009-2010):

- road accidents in winter decreased by five per cent,
- 574 fewer people were injured annually in winter road accidents,
- deaths and serious injuries due to winter road accidents decreased by three per cent.

### Winter Tire Usage in Canada

#### TRAC 2017 Canadian Consumer Winter Tire Study

In 1998 only 35 per cent of Canadian drivers used winter tires. That figure has almost doubled in 2017. TRAC's 2017 Canadian Consumer Winter Tire Study shows that winter tire usage had grown to 66 per cent; and, outside Quebec, 60 per cent of the Canadian drivers are currently using winter tires.



#### Winter Tire Use by Region (Source: TRAC 2017 Canadian Consumer Winter Tire Study):

Province	Utilization 2017 (%)	Utilization 2016 (%)	Utilization 2014 (%)
<b>National</b>	66	68	58
<b>Atlantic Canada</b>	83	81	73
<b>Quebec*</b>	100	100	100
<b>Ontario</b>	59	65	56
<b>Manitoba/Saskatchewan</b>	48	50	39
<b>Alberta</b>	57	55	45
<b>British Columbia</b>	60	49	38

\* Mandatory winter tire usage since 2008

Increasing winter tire usage nationwide is encouraging, and 22 per cent of all respondents are also considering purchase of winter tires this year. TRAC's 2017 Canadian Consumer Winter Tire Study also demonstrates that approximately 40 per cent of all drivers do not own winter tires. Among those that reported not needing winter tires:

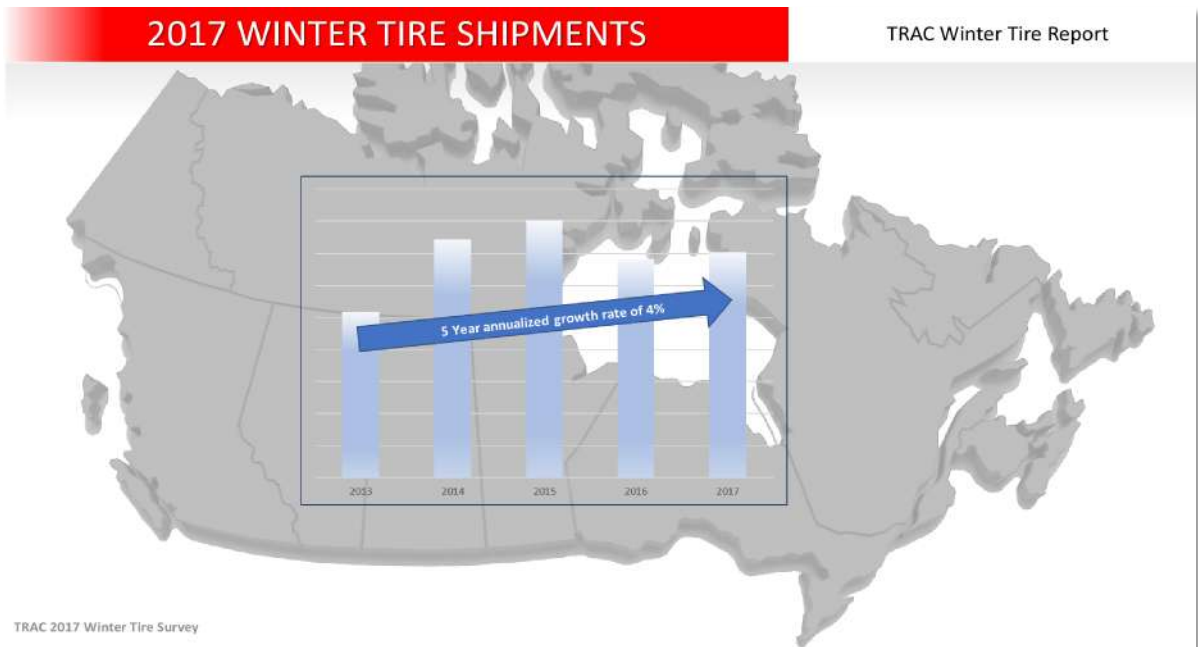
- 51 per cent believe that all-season tires are "good enough" for winter driving,
- 21 per cent cited cost as a barrier for not using winter tires,
- 22 per cent said they don't drive enough in cold-weather months to merit winter tires,
- 8 per cent stated other reasons.

"Tires are the only thing separating your car from the ground, and investing in your own safety is always a good idea. Drivers across Canada continue to benefit from the use of winter tires and, with technological advancements, there's no better time to invest in them. Winter tires will help reduce braking time, provide a better grip in sub-seven degree temperatures and, most importantly, offer you peace of mind."

— Jack Smith, President  
Canada Safety Council

### National Tire Shipments

Based on the statistical analysis of winter tire shipments across Canada by members of the Tire and Rubber Association of Canada (TRAC), the winter tire category has grown at an annualized rate of 4 per cent over the past five years, making winter tires the fastest growing category in the Canadian tire market. \*



\*Based on data collected by the Tire and Rubber Association of Canada.

## Government and Industry Leadership

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Government leaders, tire industry, and other stakeholders play a key role in encouraging winter tire usage. The case for winter tires requires a coordinated effort to give drivers the facts about winter tires and encouragement to consider their safety and performance benefits. Wider advocacy would contribute to an important reduction in winter road accidents, reducing injury and costs for thousands of Canadian motorists and their families each year.

There are many effective ways provinces can further promote road safety and increase usage of winter tires. Initiatives include providing more educational resources to drivers, offering special incentives, or restricting access to roads that are potentially too dangerous due to harsh winter conditions for drivers without winter tires.

TRAC's role focuses on educating government leaders, public and stakeholders on the safety and performance benefits of winter tires. Government, industry and interest groups can encourage increased winter tire usage nationwide by providing education, leadership, and guidance. Some examples of measures taken include:

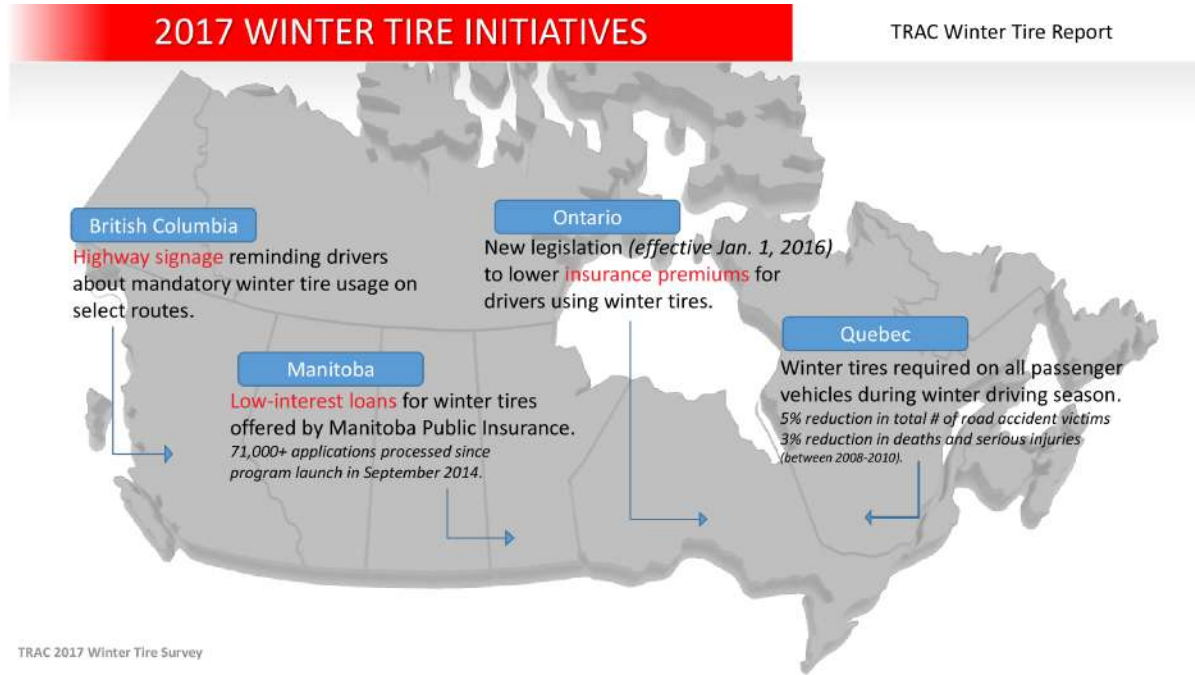
- promoting the safety benefits of winter tires through educational resources, websites, and campaigns,
- promoting winter tire usage on government fleet vehicles,
- winter tire messaging on highway signage,
- incorporating winter tire messaging into driver training and handbooks.

“Winter driving can be unpredictable and treacherous. It is important that every driver has their full attention on the task of driving, and adjust their driving to the road and weather conditions.

“It is important to leave sufficient space to stop. Remember, stopping distances can be more than double on slippery roads. The OPP also encourages the use of winter tires as they provide extra traction on snowy, cold and icy roads.”

— Kerry Schmidt  
Ontario Provincial Police

### Winter Tire Initiatives by Province



Province	Tire Initiative
<b>British Columbia</b>	British Columbia recently updated the language on signage for certain mountainous highways, indicating the need to use tires marked with the Three-Peak Mountain Snowflake Symbol or M+S marking between October 1 <sup>st</sup> and March 31 <sup>st</sup> .
<b>Manitoba</b>	An innovative program from the government of Manitoba and administered by Manitoba Public Insurance offers low-interest loans for the purchase and installation of qualified winter tires. The program was first launched in September 2014. Since then, more than 71,000 applications have been processed. This program provides loans to a maximum of \$2,000 per vehicle, for up to 48 months at the rate of prime, plus two per cent. More information on this low-cost loan program can be found at <a href="http://www.mpi.mb.ca">www.mpi.mb.ca</a> .
<b>Ontario</b>	Effective January 1, 2016, the government of Ontario implemented legislation which requires all insurance providers to reduce auto insurance premiums to drivers who have four winter tires installed on their personal passenger vehicles. Motorists are advised to ask their insurer how to qualify.
<b>Quebec</b>	Since 2008, the Province of Quebec has mandated winter tires on all passenger vehicles. Winter tires are required from Dec. 15 <sup>th</sup> , to Mar. 15 <sup>th</sup> .



## *Winter Driving Safety Initiatives by Province*

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### *Traveler Information Services*

Many provinces provide traveler information services. The 511 telephone service available in New Brunswick, Nova Scotia, Prince Edward Island, Quebec, Ontario, Manitoba and Alberta provides the public with voice-activated, hands-free information on provincial highway conditions, road closures, and construction projects.

For Saskatchewan, the telephone number is 1-888-335-7623 (toll-free in Canada), and for British Columbia the number is 1-800-550-4997 (toll-free in North America).

### *British Columbia*

The Winter Driving Safety Alliance (<https://shiftintowinter.ca/>) is a multi-agency working group that shares a common goal of reducing frequency and severity of winter-related motor vehicle crashes. Committed to improving the safety of drivers during the winter months, the Alliance is comprised of more than a dozen public, private and non-profit bodies, including TRAC.

### *Manitoba*

Manitoba Public Insurance (<https://www.mpi.mb.ca>) is a non-profit Crown Corporation dedicated to keeping Manitoba's roads safe and vehicle insurance rates low since 1971. Its mandate includes education on winter driving, and the Winter Tire Program which provides low-interest financing for winter tires to eligible Manitobans.

### *Ontario*

The Ontario Ministry of Transportation's Inter-Agency Road Safety Marketing Committee brings provincial road safety partners together to share information, support joint initiatives and develop awareness campaigns. The Agency works with community groups to promote safe and responsible winter driving practices, and increasing public awareness regarding MTO winter maintenance operations.

## Shopping for Winter Tires

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Canadians have many choices when it comes to winter tires. Individual driving habits and skillset, as well as vehicle type, road conditions, and local weather patterns play an important role when it comes to choosing the right winter tire. TRAC encourages drivers to research the tire option that is right for their individual needs: speak with local tire dealer or repair facility, and make the decision according to your individual driving needs. Additional information and resources about the safety, performance characteristics, and the list of dedicated winter tires offered by TRAC members for the 2017 winter season can be found at <http://www.tracanada.ca/>.

### Identifying a Winter Tire

A winter tire features the **Three-Peak Mountain Snowflake Symbol** (also referred to as the ‘Alpine Symbol’) on its sidewall. The tire carrying this symbol meets the industry snow traction performance requirements.



Winter tire testing is rigorous, reliable and sophisticated. Winter tires marked with 3PMS symbol must follow the ASTM F-1805 tire test on medium-packed snow in standardized testing conditions. These tires are required to meet or exceed minimum industry snow traction requirements.

### Dedicated Winter Tires Versus All-Weather Tires

Advances in rubber compounding and tire design now offer more choice for consumers when it comes to tires for winter driving. Certain winter tires are designed to perform better in snow, while others are designed to perform better on ice. Consumers also have been introduced to “all-weather” tires, which also display the Three-Peak Mountain Snowflake Symbol. Unlike a dedicated winter tire designed specifically for winter conditions, all-weather tires are made to be driven in warmer months as well, while meeting the snow traction performance requirements.

For the very best performance and safety in winter driving TRAC recommends tires manufactured specifically for winter road conditions. These tires are designed only for use during winter months and should be removed during the non-winter seasons as the tread compound is much too soft for summer driving.

### *All-Season Tires*

As noted earlier, almost half of drivers currently not using winter tires believe that all-season tires offer sufficient traction for winter road conditions. This is a misconception.

All-season tires represent a compromise when it comes to tire choice for the winter months. An “all-season” tire implies that it is suitable for all weather conditions; however, these tires do not have the Three-Peak Mountain Snowflake Symbol, and do not meet the necessary snow traction requirements to be considered a winter tire.

### *Winter Tire Safety and Performance Benefits*

Winter tires provide superior traction and braking on cold-weather road surfaces. The superior grip of today’s high-tech winter tires is the result of more flexible rubber compounds that provide superior traction even at extremely cold temperatures. These specialized rubber compounds coupled with sophisticated tread designs allow for greater control and braking capability on cold, dry, snow-covered, icy or slushy roads. Shorter stopping distances in emergency situations represent the primary safety feature of the advanced technology in today’s winter tires. Research detailed in the study from Traffic Injury Research Foundation (TIRF; [www.tirf.ca](http://www.tirf.ca)) shows that:

- at temperatures just below freezing, stopping distances for vehicles with winter tires are as much as 30 per cent shorter than for vehicles with all-season tires,
- winter tires deliver better traction on an ice or snow-covered road surface at -30°C vs. all-season tires at 4°C.

“The traction and braking capabilities of a tire designed specifically for winter far exceeds that of an all-season tire, and TRAC takes the position that designated winter tires are a far superior option to all-season tires which are designed primarily driving conditions at above 7°C.”

— Barry Yutronkie  
Director of Operations, TRAC

Temperature is everything when it comes to winter tires. At temperatures of 7°C or lower, winter tires outperform all-season and conventional summer tires, where these tires start to harden and lose traction. Monitoring tire pressure in winter months is particularly critical since tires can lose one (1) psi for every 5°C drop in temperature. During the cold-weather months, TRAC advises to measure tire pressure at least once a month using a reliable tire gauge.

## *About the Tire and Rubber Association of Canada*

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The Tire and Rubber Association of Canada (TRAC; [www.tracanada.ca](http://www.tracanada.ca)) is the national trade association representing tire makers, rubber products manufacturers and importers as well as rubber recyclers and suppliers of goods and services related to the industry. TRAC is committed to educating drivers regarding proper tire care, maintenance, and usage. A key advocacy goal in the cold-weather months is to raise awareness of safe winter driving as well as the safety and performance benefits of winter tires.

## TRAC Members

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**BRIDGESTONE**



# 2017



Tire and Rubber  
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