

Snow Tires Better than Radials

CHICAGO—Contrary to the impression of many motorists, radial tires are no substitute for snow tires for winter driving, according to new findings released by the National Safety Council.

Reporting on tests conducted by the council's Committee on Winter Driving Hazards at Stevens Point, Wis., Ray Prince, the committee secretary, said, "These tests show that snow tires provide more traction over a reasonably wide range of snow-covered road conditions than conventional radial tires that do not have a snow tread."

He added that the range of performance of the radial tires was quite broad, in some cases exceeding but in some cases even poorer than some conventional highway tires.

In these tests, seven brands of radial tires were compared with bias belted highway tires and bias belted snow tires. Both peak and spinning traction were measured with the vehicle standing still and also moving forward at a speed of 5 mph.

Snow conditions ranged from approximately one inch of medium-packed snow to as much as eight inches of loose snow.

In an earlier test program, according to Prince, the committee found that radial tires offered no advantage over conventional tires in either stopping, traction or cornering performance on glare ice.

Prince said that the current snow tests were undertaken to help municipalities decide whether to modify their snow ordinances to permit radial tires in lieu of snow tires.

"Considering the outcome of these tests and earlier findings by the council, it is obvious that conventional radial tires (without a snow tread) are not a substitute for snow tires," he concluded. "Motorists should still be advised to use snow tires for mild-to-medium snow and ice conditions and to use reinforced tire

chains for severe snow and ice conditions."

Summarizing the council's previous test findings, Prince said that conventional snow tires provide only a small improvement in pulling ability on glare ice although they produce half again as much pulling ability as regular tires in loosely packed snow.

Studded tires are appreciably more effective on ice, giving about three times the pull of regular tires. And reinforced tire chains provide from four to seven times the pulling ability of regular tires on snow and ice.