

Studded Tires

May Be Banned

The Washington State Highway Commission will recommend to the State Legislature in January, 1973, that studded tires on vehicles be outlawed on Washington State public roads.

This recommendation would include outlawing the use of studded tires on city streets, county roads and state highways throughout the state.

"Included within the recommendation would be a grace period for motorists who now have studded tires to get some use from them during the time of year when the present law permits the use of studded tires. Studs on tires now are permitted between November 1st and April 1st," said George H. Andrews, Director of Highways.

State Highway commissioners will base their recommendations for the change in law partly on research being conducted by the Washington State Highway Department and Washington State University on a test track located near the campus in Pullman, which has shown a variety of wearing patterns on a variety of pavements. Continuing research using the Riedesel Wheel at Washington State University will study how to repair the wear on the track pavements, and then subject the newly repaired pavements to additional abrasion.

Andrews said severe damage attributed to studded tires has been reported on the concrete deck of the Evergreen Point Floating Bridge on State Highway 520 between Seattle and Bellevue which carries thousands of vehicles daily across Lake Washington.

The damage caused by studded tires has been bad enough that repairs will have to be made on the concrete deck this summer. In some places the wear ruts are 3/4 inch deep, exposing structural steel.

In order to make necessary repairs, some of the lanes on the bridge will be closed causing some inconveniences to motorists at various times this summer.

Excessive wear on the grooved pavements of the "S" curves at Renton on Inter-state Highway 405 has increased the potential there for more accidents. Studded tire wear has taken off the grooving and polished the concrete road surface down to unsafe levels, increasing the danger of vehicle skidding.

Reflector buttons and white buttons installed in the pavement of multiple-lane highways to help motorists see lane edge-lines at night, have been knocked out by studded tires, thus creating driving hazards for motorists.

Many other spots along state highways have been tested by Highway Department research workers to determine skid resistance, and because of studded tire wear are showing low skid resistance. The polishing action of studded tires on highway pavements is creating skidding hazards.

The ruts in highway pavements caused by studded tire wear are increasingly dangerous in areas where water collects in the ruts and creates water spray problems. In the winter, these ruts also build up with ice causing more driving hazards.

Andrews said the state legislature took action in 1969 to allow the use of studded tires on highways within the state as a safety measure for motorists.

"We have found, however, that the wearing of our highway surfaces caused by studded tires actually has caused a safety hazard and for that reason, the Department will ask the legislature to abolish the use of studded tires."