

# Car Care Corner

## Why All-Season Tires May Not Be Best

by Ron Margadonna

(NAPSA)—While many drivers depend on all-season tires to overcome the obstacles of rough weather, a simple changeover to winter tires can help provide total traction and the confidence needed to travel through severe ice and snow.

### Four-Season Focus

The all-season tire was created to give drivers a level of traction throughout the entire year and to provide the convenience of avoiding a tire changeover. An all-season tire was intended only to provide adequate snow traction in areas that received moderate levels of snowfall, both in frequency and amount. All-season tires were not designed for heavy snowfall, nor were they designed to provide added traction on icy surfaces that are commonly encountered in even moderate amounts of snow.

### Through Ice, Sleet Or Snow

Winter tires have evolved into highly engineered products that address the range of driving conditions that consumers face, including snow, ice, slush, and wet and dry roads. Not only are winter tires the optimum choice for drivers in heavy snowfall areas, they are also suitable for drivers in moderate snowfall areas, where icy conditions can be found.

The evolution of winter tires continues to be driven by consumer demand to improve traction on ice and snow. New materials, new designs and new manufacturing techniques have been at the front of these advances:

- **Tread compound:** The rubber used in the tread is critical to winter performance because it creates the molecular—or chemical—adhesion to the road surface.
- **Tread design:** The shape of the tread provides the mechanical



**DRIVEN BY SAFETY—Winter tires are the best choice for drivers in heavy snowfall areas.**

adhesion—or traction—of the tire. The main focus is to provide more lateral grip—or side-to-side traction—with the snow surface.

- **Manufacturing process:** New molding technologies enable designers to create tread designs with greater lateral density, which improves snow traction while simultaneously reducing tire noise.

### Markings Make A Difference

One element that may confuse consumers is the “M+S” marking that was adopted by the tire industry in the early 1980s, when the all-season tire was first marketed, to identify certain tires “suitable” for snow. Unfortunately, this marking gives the false impression that tires marked “M+S” will meet all winter driving needs. Tires meeting this criterion are marked with the new icon that looks like a mountain peak with a snow flake.

The symbol applies to passenger and light truck tires and can be found on Michelin X-Ice winter tires.

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