Cold weather / winter tyres – the answers

Why should I consider putting cold weather / winter tyres on my car?
In the winter, 48 per cent of car accidents in the UK are the result of skidding. Fitted at the beginning of the winter season, cold weather / winter tyres permit you to drive with confidence for the entire period and also substitute the use of chains in extreme weather.

How can fitting cold weather / winter tyres on my car affect braking and aquaplaning?
Typically, in wet conditions when temperatures are below 7°C, braking distances of cold weather tyres are 10 per cent shorter than if summer tyres were fitted. Similarly, braking distances in icy conditions are reduced by as much as 20 per cent. Thanks to the specific cold weather tyre tread pattern design and the use of sipes, the adhesion on dangerous wet, snowy and icy surfaces is maximised.

What in the tyre makes the difference though?
Modern high performance summer tyres have a harder tread compound, engineered to ensure grip at medium / high temperatures. The molecules in the tread rubber freeze and harden as temperatures fall, thereby increasing the risk of aquaplaning and increasing braking distance. Cold weather tyres use a higher proportion of natural rubber in the tread, minimising the hardening effect at low temperatures. This results in higher grip levels.

Should I get the same performance from cold weather / winter tyres?
Cold weather tyres deliver a better performance under 7°C whilst maintaining the same drive comfort as summer tyres.

Will cold weather / winter tyres really make a difference to my mobility in the car?
With the right tyres, you don't fear the weather. Cold weather tyres protect you in any condition and help you get safely to your destination. They ensure maximum mobility throughout all cold weather conditions.

Won't they end up costing more?
Alternating summer and cold weather tyres in accordance to seasons increases the longevity of a tyre and therefore saves money in the long-run.

I live in the city and during the winter I drive only around the road, do I need winter tyres?
For most of the period between October and March the average temperature can easily be below 7°C. At these temperatures winter tyres have a greater grip than summer ones, whose composition during the cold months hardens with consequent reduction of grip, traction and, therefore, braking.

Why can't I leave the cold weather / winter tyres on all year round?
Winter tyres are developed in order to ensure the best performance when the temperature is below 7°C. During the summer, the composition, which is softer

than summer tyres, tends to wear out much quicker, which will compromise safety and performance.

Can winter tyres be used only on snow?
Winter tyres are developed to actively react in he presence of snow and they also offer better performance than summer tyres even on dry and wet surfaces during the entire cold season. This is due to a greater adherence to the ground and a tread pattern design that reduces aquaplaning compared to summer tyres giving greater reliability and safety to the driver.

Can I mount only two snow tyres on the driving wheels and keep the summer tyres on the others?
This solution is strongly inadvisable because if your car is front-wheel-drive and the snow tyres are only mounted on the front wheels you risk spinning. If your car is rear-wheel-drive and the tyres are only mounted on the back wheels you risk sliding off the road when turning.

If I mount winter tyres am I forced to drastically reduce my speed?
No. Some winter tyres are approved for speeds up to 270 km/h (speed rating W). Obviously, the speed limits imposed by the Highway Code and the weather conditions must always be respected.