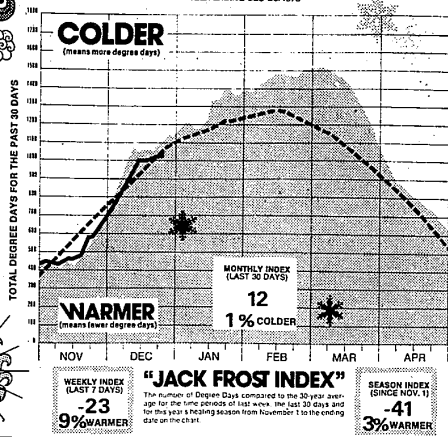


WINTER 'WEATHER CHANGE'

WEEK ENDING DEC 23, 1978

COLDER
(means more degree days)

Winter temps on target

After a warm November and early December, temperatures are falling into line with the 30-year average, according to Consumers Power. Up to now, according to the utility statistics, consumers have

had to use less energy than in preceding years. But, as the index shows, the worst winter weather lays in wait. Last year (the area in gray) winter's cold did not peak until mid-March.

Winter driving expert says 'extras' matter

It's the extras that count when it comes to safe winter driving—extra time, extra space, extra precautions against winter's deadly tricks.

This is the contention of a man who should know, Raymond Prince, secretary of the National Safety Council's Committee on Winter Driving Hazards.

Prince's job is coordinating the committee's yearly activities, including the council's annual winter driving test project at Stevens Point, Wis. The program provides a proving ground where equipment and vehicle control techniques are tested under uniform and carefully controlled ice and snow conditions.

Too many drivers misjudge the extra distances needed to stop, Prince contends, citing findings that braking distances on snow and ice may be from three to nine times the normal distance on dry pavement.

Prince cites this comparison: From a speed of only 20 miles an hour on glare ice at 25 degrees, the braking distance averages about 150 feet—close to nine car lengths. Compare that to the fact that, under reasonably good conditions, a car can be braked to a stop in this same distance—150 feet—from a speed of 50 miles an hour on good dry pavement.

"In other words," Prince points out, "for equal stopping" ability, speeds on glare ice should be cut to about one-third of those that might be considered reasonable under ideal conditions."

Temperature also plays an important role in the slipperiness of ice and packed snow, according to skid-test findings. At temperatures near freezing (32 degrees) the braking distance on glare ice may be as much as 260 ft. (about 15 car lengths) from 20 mph, twice the stopping distance at zero degrees.

This factor, Prince said, traps many an unwary driver who starts out on an icy or snowy pavement in the morning when the temperature is cold. He feels he has reasonably good control.

Later, the temperature rises. He may suddenly discover that he is driving far too fast to stop or maneuver to avoid an accident. This is one reason for the skid-testers' admonition to "get the feel of the road" continuously throughout the day.

In relation to stopping, committee findings emphasize:

• Tire chains are your best aid in stopping on ice, where they cut braking distance by 50 per cent as compared with regular highway tires.

• Where studded tires may be used legally, they help. Tires with new studs on the rear wheels reduce braking distances about 19 per cent on ice; about 13 per cent after 2,500 miles of wear.

When it comes to getting started and keeping going:

• On ice—conventional snow tires develop about 28 per cent more traction ability than regular tires; studded snow tires provide about three times

and chains about seven times the traction of regular tires.

• On loosely packed snow—conventional snow tires develop about half again as much pulling ability as regular tires, while tire chains provide about four times the pull of regular tires.

Other findings of interest include:

• Small vs. large cars—In general a sub-compact car will stop in a shorter distance in a panic stop on ice than a compact car, which in turn is likely to require a shorter distance than a standard car. Lighter cars, however, have notable difficulty getting started, particularly at warmer ice temperatures.

• Radial tires—contrary to the impression of many motorists, radial tires are not necessarily a substitute for snow tires for driving on snow and ice. The performance of radial tires varies widely and is dependent on tread configuration, i.e., a snow tread will perform as a snow tire, a regular tread will perform as a regular highway tire.

In spite of the help provided by these traction aids for both stopping and starting, Prince concluded, performance is nowhere equal that on normal dry pavement.

• Our best advice is to reduce speeds drastically, follow other vehicles at a far greater distance, and perform all maneuvers—slowing, steering or accelerating—with a gentle, delicate touch. Easy does it."

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