

# Winter conditions force drivers to adopt a different attitude

The gentle touch does it every time in winter driving. Aggressive starting, steering, and control inputs can lead to skids and slides.

## Handling Hills

Before going up a hill, build up momentum to help you climb. When coming down use a lower gear to assist the brakes.

## Go Slow

Slow down well in advance of intersections and leave plenty of room between you and the other driver. Allow extra time to reach your destination. Remember the tires are your only contact with the road surface and have little traction when it is slippery.

Aids to traction, while useful in specific conditions, do not eliminate the possible problems that can arise. Slow down, remain calm and plan all actions in advance.

## Getting Going

Easy does it when starting on icy or hard packed snow sur-

faces. The application of too much power will spin wheels. If you can't get moving, first turn your wheels side to side a few times to push the snow out of the way then steer straight ahead and ease forward gently. Spinning wheels only gets you in deeper unless the ice or snow surface is thin or brittle.

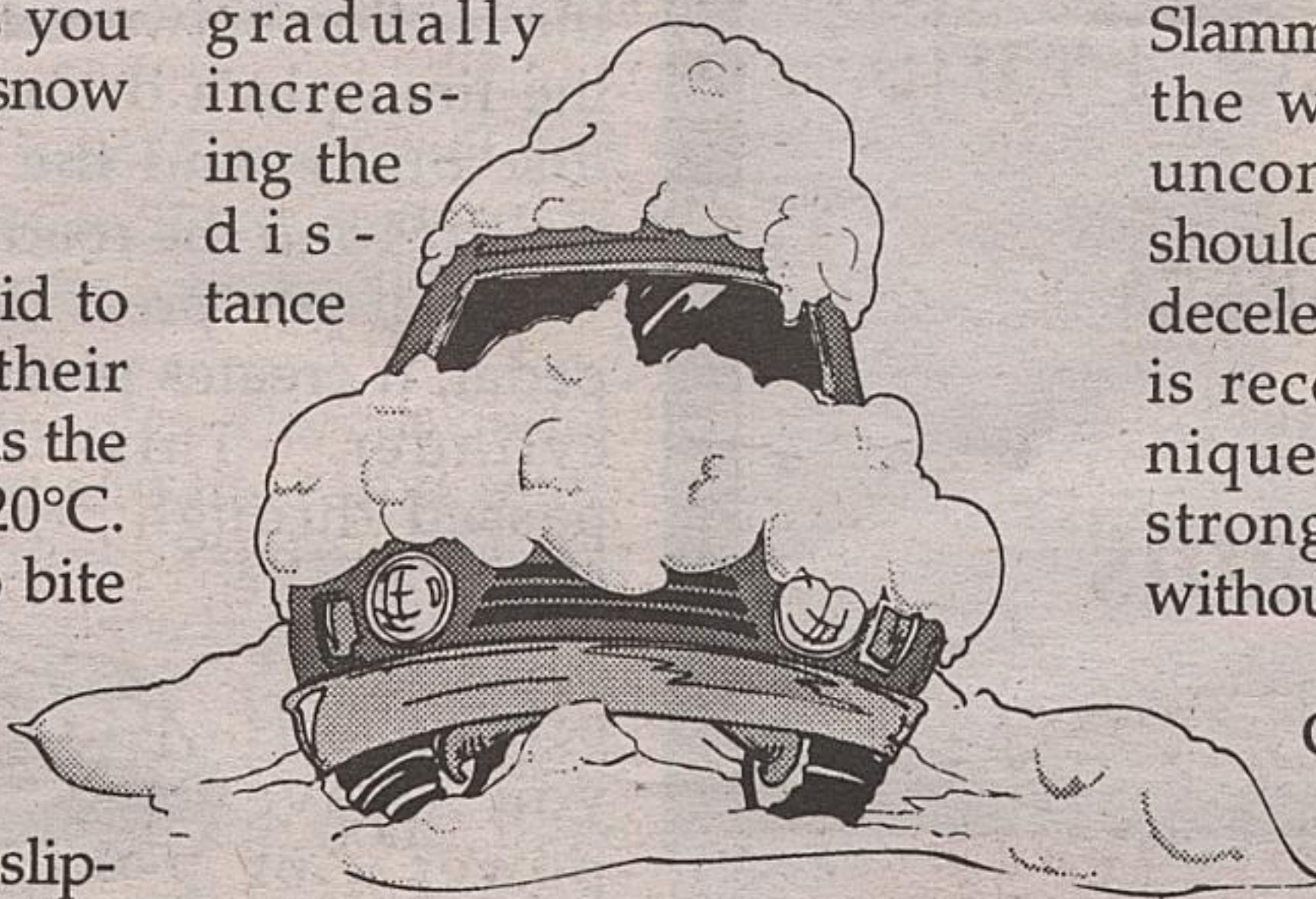
## Improve Traction

Tire chains are a great aid to traction. However, even their effectiveness is eliminated as the temperature approaches -20°C. Snow tires are designed to bite into packed snow but are little help on ice or hard-packed snow.

Sanded surfaces may be slippery. While sand is very effective in increasing traction on ice and hard-packed snow at temperatures near the freezing point, it too, becomes increasingly less effective if applied to slippery surfaces as the temperature approaches -20°C. Approach ice or hard packed snow with care.

## If You Get Stuck

Clear away snow from around the tires. Spread a little sand, rock, salt, or ashes under the tires. Gently rock the car back and forth, shifting from forward to reverse, gradually increasing the distance



traveled with each rock. If the going is heavy, this is the time to put on tire chains, but remove them as soon as the road is clear to prevent damage to the road surface or the car and wear on the tires. (Check owners manual before "rocking" the vehicle).

The Greater The Distance

A much greater distance is needed to bring a vehicle to a halt in icy or snowy conditions. This means a greater distance between the driver and the car in front and reduced speed to decrease stopping distance. Slamming the brakes could lock the wheels and produce an uncontrolled skid. Motorists should brake gently or for faster deceleration, threshold braking is recommended. (This technique consists of applying a strong steady brake pressure without locking the wheels)

## See And Be Seen

Changing weather conditions often affect visibility and perception.

Drive with headlights on at all times! Keep your windows clean and free from snow, dirt, and ice. Use windshield washers often when driving in slushy conditions. Road spray may reduce your headlight and tail light efficiency so clean them often. In a snowfall use low beams to reduce the glare and

reflection from the snow.

Do not take chances in poor weather conditions: Plan to stay put or look for somewhere to pull off the road completely until the weather improves.

## Out Of Control

Speed, sudden acceleration, abrupt lane changes, sharp turns or braking can put you into a spin. If your vehicle starts to slide take your foot off the accelerator and declutch (manual shift) or shift to neutral (automatic shift). Do Not Brake! Follow your natural impulse and steer to keep the car going in its original direction but be careful-don't oversteer. When you feel the car regaining traction start to straighten your wheels but be prepared to handle a skid in the opposite direction.

Winter driving is different but it can be managed safely. Know what to expect and how to handle it. Drive safely this winter by putting on the winter driving habit.

—Canada Safety Council

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