

TRACTION CONTROL

WHAT IS TRACTION CONTROL?

Traction control helps prevent your wheels from spinning, or “wheel slip,” when attempting to accelerate when roads are slippery. When it senses that one or more of your wheels is about to spin, it applies the correct amount of braking to one or more of the wheels.

Similar to anti-lock braking systems (ABS), traction control and ABS often are installed together. In slippery conditions, ABS helps prevent wheel slip while braking. In contrast, traction control does the same thing but while the vehicle is accelerating.

It is important to know, however, that traction control cannot ‘create’ traction if there is none available on the road.

HOW DOES TRACTION CONTROL WORK?

An electronic control unit (ECU), a car computer feature, manages the traction control system. The ECU uses sensors in each wheel to monitor their individual speeds of rotation. If the ECU detects that one wheel is spinning faster than the others (losing traction), it sends a message to reduce the speed of that wheel, lessening the slip.

Traction control systems use different methods to reduce the rotational speed of each wheel. Some “pump” the individual wheel brake, while others combine this with reduced engine power.

Once the wheels have regained traction, the system disengages and returns to monitoring the speed of each wheel.

Your brain is your vehicle's most important safety feature.

Without Traction Control

With Traction Control

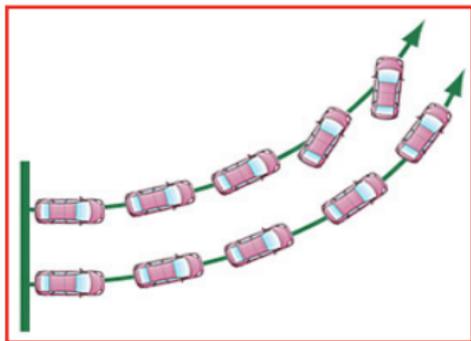


Image courtesy of Toyota Canada

IMPORTANT POINTS ABOUT TRACTION CONTROL

- Similar to ABS, it is normal to hear grinding sounds and possibly feel the gas pedal pulsate when traction control engages.
- Traction control helps you maintain steering control by preventing the car's wheels from spinning. Thus, you must be careful not to exaggerate your steering, which may make the vehicle more difficult to control.
- When traction control is engaged, drivers experience better handling in slippery conditions. This may lead drivers to reach higher speeds than is appropriate for roadway conditions. Drivers should monitor their driving and not exceed safe speeds for the road conditions.

Visit www.brainonboard.ca to learn more about traction control.

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