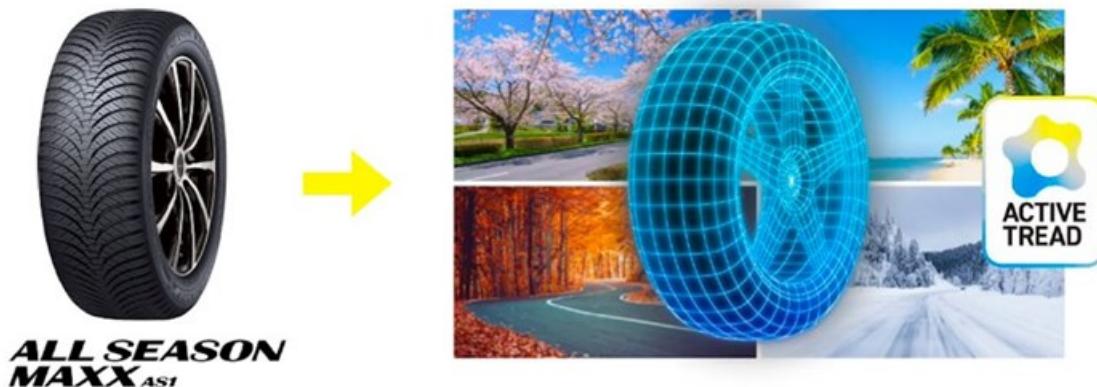


Sumitomo Rubber to launch 'smart' all-season tyres in 2024

Issued by [Sumitomo Dunlop](#)

4 Dec 2023

Sumitomo Rubber Industries, the Japan-based parent company of Dunlop manufacturer, Sumitomo Rubber South Africa, has announced it will release next-generation all-season tyres in late 2024 equipped with a new technology called Active Tread that can adapt to sudden changes in all weather conditions.



President Satoru Yamamoto made the announcement recently at the Japan Mobility Show 2023 held at Tokyo Big Sight (Koto, Tokyo).

"Active Tread is a technology in which a special material is mixed with rubber, so that the tyre becomes soft when it meets water, and adjusts itself to temperature changes such as wet road, snowy or cold weather conditions, but returns to its original hardness in sunny or hot weather. We challenged the industry's conventional wisdom that tyres become slippery on wet road conditions or snowy days," he explained.

Based on the technology that took six years from its conception, the company will develop tyres for electric vehicles (EVs) and other applications, ensuring uninterrupted safe driving even during automated driving.

President Yamamoto emphasised: "Achieving both low energy consumption and optimal wet-weather handling in electric vehicles presents a challenging engineering paradox. With Active Tread, we can achieve both and be ahead of the rest of the world."

The company also boasts Sensing Core technology, which transforms tyres into sensors by gathering real-time data on road conditions, tyre wear, load, and air pressure, using data such as tyre rotational speed and the amount of tyre slip on the road surface as key indicators.

"In the future, we aim to create tyres that can be used continuously regardless of region or season and are less susceptible to weather changes. Additionally, by reducing the need to replace tyres, we will reduce the burden on the environment and contribute to the realisation of a more sustainable society," added President Yamamoto.

The specific features, prices, and availability of the new tyres with Active Tread will be announced in 2024.



President Satoru Yamamoto, Sumitomo Rubber, announces all-season tyres

Refining new technologies

With the rise of electric vehicles, autonomous vehicles, car sharing, ride sharing, and other new types of mobility services, the automotive industry is increasingly seeing a shift in the role that vehicles play. Consequently, there are major changes in the functional and performance requirements of tyres.

With an eye toward the Mobility Society of the Future, the Sumitomo Rubber Group is actively pushing ahead with research and development under its Smart Tyre Concept. This catchall term describes the group's ongoing efforts to develop the various technologies that will create the tyres of the future.

Locally, Sumitomo Rubber South Africa is investing significantly into its passenger car radial production facility which will allow the company to manufacture a wider set of products that meet and exceed OE specifications and future automotive industry requirements. The investment includes new plant equipment and machinery.

The new high-spec, technology-driven equipment and optimised production processes will reduce the plant's environmental impact, aligned to Sumitomo Rubber Industries' global sustainability goal of zero carbon emissions by 2050.

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