

February 19, 2021
For immediate release

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Yokohama Rubber Fortifies Indoor Ice-Surface Testing Facility at Tire Test Center of Hokkaido with Massive New Cooling Unit

Tokyo—The Yokohama Rubber Co., Ltd., announced today that it has installed a new cooling unit in the indoor ice-surface testing facility at its Tire Test Center of Hokkaido. Yokohama completed the installation work at the test center, which is in Asahikawa, in November 2020.

At about 100 meters long, the cooling unit is one of the largest of its kind in Japan. It allows for setting the temperature of the ice surface anywhere between -10°C and 0°C (14°F and 32°F) at a room temperature of 5°C (41°F). The newly fortified facility supports tire testing of studless snow tires at reliably precise temperatures throughout that range. In addition, it has given Yokohama new capacity for testing on ice in early winter. That lengthens the seasonal span over which Yokohama can conduct brake-testing on ice and broadens Yokohama's R&D calendar. The company can thus undertake a greatly expanded scope of ice-surface testing for studless snow tires, studded tires, and all-season tires.

The Tire Test Center of Hokkaido was opened in December 2015 to expand Yokohama's tire testing capacity in line with the global expansion of its tire business, and to introduce more sophisticated evaluation methods. That globalization necessitated increasingly advanced testing of a growing number of winter tire sizes. Yokohama tests winter tires for passenger cars and for trucks and buses at the center. It also tests summer tires at the center during the months from spring to autumn. Yokohama opened the indoor facility for ice-surface testing in January 2018 to test winter tires at precisely controlled surface temperatures.

In addition to the Tire Test Center of Hokkaido, Yokohama operates the Yokohama Test Center of Sweden for winter tire testing. The Hokkaido test center handles testing for a global portfolio of winter tires, while the Swedish center conducts additional tests to confirm the suitability and performance of tires to be sold in continental Europe, Russia and Northern Europe.



The new cooling unit (left) and an ice surface for testing tires

Profile of Yokohama Rubber's Hokkaido test facility

Name: Tire Test Center of Hokkaido (TTCH)
Start of operations: December 2015
Location: 500 Kamiubun, Kamui-cho, Asahikawa City, Hokkaido Prefecture
Site area: 906,462 square meters
Tested products: Winter tires used on passenger cars, trucks and buses (also tests summer tires from spring to autumn)
Courses: A 2.3-kilometer circuit that includes a 1-kilometer straightaway for testing at speeds of up to more than 100 kilometers per hour on hard snow; an ice track; a snow and ice hill track; snow and ice circles; and a 1.1-kilometer snow-surface handling track that spans a gradient of 5%

Profile of the Indoor Facility for Ice-Surface Testing

Building size: 119 meters long, 24 meters wide, 8.8 meters high (at highest point)
Total floor area: 2,859.6 square meters
Construction: Steel-framed single-story structure
Start of operations: January 2018