

Introduction

The skid resistance of highway pavements, particularly when wet, is a serious problem of increasing concern to highway engineers and researchers. As traffic speeds and densities continue to rise, the chances of skidding accidents, as well as their consequences, are both growing at an alarming rate with each passing year.

Unfortunately, nearly all pavement surfaces that are economically feasible to construct lose their high initial skid resistance with exposure to today's traffic. And while the skid resistance of dry pavements is generally good and nearly independent of speed, wet pavements often have poor skid resistance even at low speeds. To make matters worse, their skid resistance can be substantially lowered at high speeds where skid resistance is critical. Past improvements in vehicle and tire performance have unfortunately been largely offset by higher speeds so that there has been no net gain in safety margins.

For this reason, highway engineers are faced with a continuing problem of building pavements with higher and more long-lasting skid resistance. In the development and maintenance of such surfaces, the measurement of skid resistance plays a vital role. To deal with the problem rationally and objectively, the engineer and researcher need to understand the multitude of complex and interrelated factors that make for good, long-lasting skid resistance.

The papers presented in this symposium address themselves to various aspects of the overall problem. Through implementation of these and related research findings, it is hoped that all road-building agencies at all levels—city, county, state, and federal—can unite their efforts to provide safer pavements to the motoring public.

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