

# 10) Riding in bad weather

## Rain

Riding in the rain presents several problems. The road is slippery, you cannot see or be seen as well, and your brakes may be less effective. If you're caught in the rain and don't have a rainsuit, you should get off the road if you have a long way to go to your destination.

When riding in the rain, you must slow down and ride very smoothly. Try to avoid shiny spots on the road. They are polished and slippery. A puddle could hide a large pothole and traction is worse in deeper water. Test your brakes periodically. A very light application of the brakes will dry them out if necessary.

You may also have difficulty seeing out of your helmet's visor and you may have to raise it slightly, just enough to allow some air to circulate behind it. Some gloves designed for motorcyclists have a chamois surface on the back which you can use to wipe water off the face shield.

Do not ride during thunderstorms to avoid the risk of being struck by lightning.

## Fog

Fog reduces your ability to see road conditions and other drivers, and to be seen yourself. An expert rider will watch for fog in low lying areas and by lakes or rivers close to the road. Fog may be present at sunrise, sunset or other times when the air temperature is rapidly changing. As in rain, you will have to wipe your face shield or raise it to be able to see out.

In really heavy fog you will be able to see only a few metres. Any time you cannot see farther than your stopping distance, you are riding blind. If there is something stopped on the road, you will hit it. If you slow down enough to be able to stop in heavy fog conditions, you may very well be hit from behind, so either way you lose. The only smart thing to do is find a safe place to stop and wait for conditions to improve.

## Winter riding

In the section on perception and prediction (section 5), the importance of predicting what other drivers may do was emphasized. In winter or in cold weather, even if the road conditions are good, other drivers will not be expecting to see motorcyclists. Expert motorcyclists must be even more careful of what other drivers may do and should assume that other drivers have not seen them.

The motorcyclist must also anticipate sudden changes in the road surface. Icy or snow-covered patches may be found at:

- shady parts of the roadway
- bridges
- open, wind-swept areas
- side roads not completely cleared

If you find you are unable to avoid riding on a very slippery surface such as ice or snow, slow down as much as possible before you get to it. Pull the clutch, coast across and stay off the brakes. On a long section of snow-covered roadway, try to ride on loose or fresh snow. Hard-packed snow has less traction than loose snow.

The other danger of riding in winter is the cold. The cold will affect the performance of both rider and equipment. Here are some things to watch for:

- Cold weather lowers tire pressure, so check it regularly.
- Your face shield will have a greater tendency to fog.
- Wear sufficiently warm clothing.