

FALL TIPS TO KEEP YOU ROLLING

By Rocket



While a lot of riders are putting their bikes away for the summer, lots of CVMA 27-2 riders will ride through the entirety of Fall. Here are a few tips I hope will help keep my chapter brothers and sisters upright during some of the best riding days all year.

Cold and wet

Personally, I don't always do a such a good job of looking at the weather reports/forecasts during the summer. Riding wet during the summer is tolerable, riding wet and *cold* in the Fall is

another thing entirely, and can seriously add to your distractions that compromise your awareness. Do yourself a favor before heading out in the Fall, let the weatherman give you a heads up.

Traction

Often midday temperatures are warm and comfortable for riding, but overnight temperatures may be near freezing. It becomes necessary to be cognizant of the traction-reducing-dew on the roads in the early morning hours during the fall. Pay particular attention to dew, or maybe even frost, on bridges and other elevated surfaces like railroad crossings. Keep in mind that shady areas stay wet or frosty longer into the day in the Fall. Mix in some wet leaves and you have a real prescription for traction loss.



Another consequence of shady areas are their ability to hide additional road hazards like sand/gravel areas and potholes.

While we are on the subject of traction, keep in mind that NOW is the most important time to have some tread left. Been riding all summer? Check to see what tread is left before heading out in the Fall. Motorcycle tires, by design, are efficient at displacing water but are not exempt from hydroplaning especially when they are bald. If it is the first rain in a few days, remember that the initial 30 minutes brings up all the oils that have accumulated since the last time the rain was sufficient to wash it off. If all of that wasn't enough, there is also the

consideration that cold tires don't have the traction of warm ones. Get a couple of miles under you to warm the tires before expecting full traction.

Mitigating Fall Temperatures

Ok, you've been spoiled all summer not having to put much thinking into what you were wearing. Being Fall now, all of that has changed. Beyond your base layer, mid layers (sweatshirts, heavy shirts or hoodies) and a wind proof shell outer layer will serve you well. If that wind proof shell is a rain suit - all the better. Layering is the trick. Getting chilly? - Add a layer. Too warm? - peel one of the mid layers off.



If you ride as much as I do, you are going to get wet sometimes, no matter what the weather man says, so choose a rain shell if you can.

Riding comfortably dry isn't just a matter of comfort - it's very distracting to be soaked and cold. Being able to see is critical too. If you don't already own clear goggles, face forming glasses, or a clear face shield - get some. Keeping water out of your eyes is vital.

Adjust for the conditions present

When the weather is less than perfect, adjust your speed and spacing accordingly. A dry summer day's stopping distance isn't going to work for you in the rain, dew, or leaves. Nor can you safely take those turns and curves at the speeds you were doing on dry pavement all summer.

Smoothness is the key in wet or slick conditions even more than it normally is. Every turn or curve reduces the vertical component of traction. Leaves, wet surfaces or even worse - both, reduce traction even more in the turns and curves. Under these conditions, *easing out* the clutch, *gently* increasing brake pressure when you need to slow or stop, and *smooth* steering input will help your tires ROLLING rather than sliding, keeping you and your expensive machine, upright.

Even more distraction

Cage drivers (cars or trucks) venture out to see the fall colors, not to look for motorcycle riders. Drivers that are normally distracted with cell-phones, texting and a myriad of other things are even more distracted admiring Fall foliage. Plan for that - keep your distance from other vehicles. While their awareness may be even less this time of year, that means YOUR awareness needs to compensate.

What about *your* distractions? Riding while cold can cause a number of distractions. When a rider begins to shiver, get stiff, or ride in an unorthodox position trying to pick up some engine heat, awareness suffers. All of these distractions can reduce your ability to control the motorcycle safely, not to mention just being uncomfortable. A simple reduction in speed, some maneuvering room (an escape route), and some increased awareness can make all the difference.

Fall is deer season



Fall riding presents some particular hazards, none more challenging than deer season. While crops are being harvested, the areas deer forage is reduced. Additionally, as farm equipment run through the fields, deer are pushed into other areas closer to the road. Hunters also push deer into the open. Fall is the breeding season for deer making them run even more eagerly than normal.

The best defense is to stay aware. Scan the roadway and just off of the shoulders in rural areas.

Typically, deer activity is at its highest at dusk and dawn. Areas where crops or timber are relatively close to the road will present the greatest challenge. These are the perfect places for deer to cross and, unfortunately, will provide you the shortest reaction time. Adjust your speeds accordingly and stay alert!

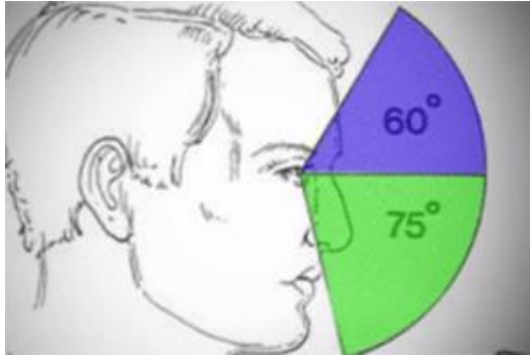
Blinding glare

Finally, a couple of words about low sun angles in the Fall and the glare that can blind you. All of us have experienced driving or riding into the sun on a Fall day. In a cage, it is a bit easier to minimize with



your vehicle's eyebrow visors or even just holding your hand up to block the sun. It's not nearly as easy on a motorcycle that has no visors and may require both hands just as you turn into the glare.

Below is what I did to mitigate the problem:



Here is a picture I found on the internet that shows how much visibility the average person has above and below the horizon. Good riding technique dictates being able to see from directly in front of you, all the way to the horizon (the green portion in the drawing).

Fortunately for us, even setting suns on the ocean cannot get *below* the horizon (the horizontal line that separates the blue and green areas). Blinding glare happens when

the sun dips in the blue area, *close* to the green area.

Here is what I did to solve the problem for me:

I removed the flip down visor from my helmet and used some plastic electrical tape to mask off most of the part of the visor that allowed vision well into the blue area. With the tape in place and my head perfectly level, I can only see a little way into the upper blue area (where the damn glare is).



The picture to the left is a closer detail of my masking job on the visor. Below is this same picture I got off the internet where I messed with it to show how my visor cuts off the sun's glare.



With a slight tilt of my head up or down, I can adjust this "*glare cut-off angle*" where I want it, and still see all the way to the horizon.



Thanks for reading, enjoy your Fall riding!

Regards,
Rocket

Last Wednesday along Skyline Drive