

Crossroads HOG

February 2011 Safety Thought

Riding (or not) and inclement Weather

We all know it happens. There are times when we are out on our motorcycles and the weather changes from dry to wet – from pleasant to unpleasant – from beautiful to dangerous. AND, there are times when we've planned a trip, made the reservations, paid the deposits and the weather just will not cooperate. Welcome to motorcycling – we can't just roll up the windows and go. Our mode of transportation dictates that we EXPERIENCE the weather. It is always a good idea to check the weather forecast and conditions before your ride begins – where you are and where you're going.

Here's a short review of weather related riding do's and don'ts.

- **Check the weather** forecasts before starting out. If you are on a multi-day trip, check each day. Make sure you are prepared.
- **When the rain starts**, the road is most slippery because the oil, rubber, and whatnot are lifted from the surface and become an enhanced lubricant. Traction diminishes. It is best for you to get off the road for a while or delay departure. Let the rain wash the surface of the roads.
- **IF you cannot stop or while you are finding a safe place to stop**, slow down. Execute turns and curves more conservatively and stop more gradually. Remember – if you lock the rear wheel, keep it locked and guide the bike to a safe stop (upright) with gentle application of the front brake. Leave more space between you and whatever you are following.
- **When the weather turns cold** suddenly (with or without rain) you need to take steps to keep yourself warm. Find a safe place to stop and put on clothing to keep warm. Using your rain suit as the outer layer will greatly enhance your ability to keep warm – especially if you have long sleeves.

There is one severe weather condition that you want to pay particular attention to – **LIGHTNING**:

- It always comes with a thunderstorm and it can KILL YOU! There are 8,640,000 lightning strikes on earth each day! There are 54,795 strikes in the USA each day!
- It does not strike the tallest object in the area but, rather, the best conductor.
- Your tires do not insulate you from being a likely conductor.
- If you hear thunder, lightning is near.
- Watch for threatening cloud formations.
- Never ride in or into a thunderstorm. Find suitable shelter (not a tree) and wait it out.

That's my thought to share for this month. I hope you can use it to ride safely.

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