

Patriot Harley-Davidson [PatriotHarleyDavidson@mail5.subscribermail.com]

### **Wet Weather Riding Wisdom:**

Riding in the Rain can be a bit controversial. Many new riders consider it crazy to ride in the rain and non-riders are usually shocked that I ride on wet roads but most experienced riders know that with the right gear and the right technique riding in the rain is just a little less fun than riding on dry pavement.

For some less experienced wet weather riders here are few good tips:

The right gear makes all the difference!! The difference between “denim, canvas shoes and a half shell helmet” and “Gore-tex, rain proof boots and face protection” is night and day! When you are soaked to the skin and your face is being pelted with rain that feels like needles above 45mph it is hard to have a good time. A good rain suit that seals properly around the neck, dry comfortable feet and a full face helmet or windshield to keep the needles away can leave you ready to enjoy the ride rather than heading for the nearest overpass. You can also gear up with waterproof gloves and rain gaiters. Other items that can help are Windshield Water Repellent Treatment (99841-01), Windshield Cleaner Wipes (97406-10), and if you have a touring model, vented lower fairings can redirect the water, too.

Smooooth! You are riding on wet pavement- not ice. You still have plenty of traction but there is less; doing things smoothly will reduce the risk of breaking traction. Shifting gears, braking, accelerating and leaning into turns can all be done safely, just slow down a little and do them smoothly.

Use extra caution in trouble spots: Painted surfaces are more slick than asphalt when they get wet; Intersections are more likely to collect oil, anti-freeze, brake fluid and the like so they are always more of a trouble spot- when wet they command even more respect; puddles are usually fine- in fact motorcycles are less likely to hydroplane- but it is hard to tell if a puddle is 1 inch deep or if it is concealing a large pothole or other problem- try to avoid larger puddles but at least slow down before you go thru them.

Maintenance. If you don't know what PSI to set your tire pressure to you do not check it enough. Improperly inflated tires, worn tires or old hardened tires will all reduce your ability to ride safely in the rain. As often as we plead with people to check their tire pressure it seems to mostly fall on deaf ears; most of the bikes that arrive in our service department are at least 20% low. Keep in mind that a cubic foot of air represents a far greater percentage of the air in a motorcycle tire than it does a car tire so the amount of air you lose in a month or two in your car may not be significant on the gauge but the same volume of air out of your bike tire could be 20%. Check 'em- Don't wreck 'em!

See and be seen. Pretty basic but...you might want to swap the shades for clears and make sure your headlight is operational. To make sure you are seen is always important but more so in the rain. Make sure the brake lights are working properly and consider some reflective or High-Vis riding gear. If you are concerned about how visible your lights are upgrade your bulbs or come see our parts counter about adding an LED Brake light kit, or a new Harley LED Headlight!

Have Fun! Years ago I volunteered to ride a buddy's bike back home for him because it was raining; he thought I was a saint because he was in a dry car and I was in the rain. I thought he was a sucker 'cause I was in a dry rain suit getting to ride his cool bike while he was stuck in the cage!! Not sure I ever told him the full story.

Our FHOG safety Officer Jackie Everett had some other excellent tips that ran in last month's Stars and Pipes, if you haven't read it already do yourself a favour and check it out; it has some great info that we don't have the space for. If you are not a member and wish to get the newsletter and participate in fun rides and other events, check out their website here or stop by and register at the receptionist's desk.  
Be safe and, as always, enjoy the ride!