



5 TIPS FOR RIDING IN THE RAIN

If you're like most riders, you avoid riding in the rain. But rain showers are known to pop up unexpectedly, and with a little forethought and knowledge rain riding can be reasonably safe and even fun.

1 // Stay Comfortable

You'll want to stay dry so you're comfortable but also to avoid distraction. Investing in good waterproof gear is often the difference between enduring a rain ride and enjoying it. Supplementing your usual gear with a waterproof shell is a good way to go, but make sure the fit is snug. Look for gear that packs small and is reasonably easy to put on and take off.

2 // Keep a Clear Shield

Without windshield wipers, we must resort to turning our head left and right at speed to get our visor to clear, or wipe away water with our gloves (a built-in finger squeegee is helpful). Fogging can be minimized with a breath guard or a Pinlock face shield insert—that's doubly helpful because when there's no fog you can keep water from getting on the inside of your shield by leaving it shut.

3 // Be Seen

Seeing is good, and being seen is just as helpful. Bright colors and reflective stickers may not be your style but will surely help you stand out on gloomy days. Be sure all of your lights are working and signal early before reducing speed so you don't get rear-ended. Also, adjust lane position to create the best line of sight for you and your machine, and keep an eye out for low spots in the road where water can puddle or hide debris.

4 // Ride Smart

Slowing down to minimize the risk of hydroplaning is a good idea, plus it gives you more time and space to respond to hazards. Increased following distance is extra important in the rain. Riding closely behind other vehicles is asking for trouble in the best conditions, but it's downright foolish when it's raining. ABS offers a big safety advantage in these situations, but it's better to ride smart so you don't need to brake hard enough to trigger the ABS in the first place. Traction is reduced because of water but also from accumulated road grime. A steady rain will eventually wash the slime away, but this takes time. So be extra careful at the beginning of a rainstorm, especially if it hasn't rained in several days. Most goop settles in the middle of the lane, so be gentle when braking or accelerating over that area. Road paint, tar snakes, railroad tracks, and construction plates can become insanely slick when wet. If you can't avoid riding over these hazards then slow way down, remain as upright as possible, and avoid any braking or accelerating as you cross over them.

5 // Be Smooth

There can be a surprising amount of grip on wet roads, but it's always important to be smooth and recognize that traction is indeed reduced compared to dry conditions. That being the case, it's also important to reduce lean angle while cornering. Leaning your upper body toward the inside of the curve allows the bike to remain more upright. Ensure that your arms are relaxed by bracing your legs and lower torso against the pegs and gas tank. That way the front tire doesn't have to fight against upper-body tension.