

Riding Season has Arrived!

By: Greg Smith, Sr. Road Captain

Wow, it's September and the doors for the Fall riding season have just opened. Even though Fall starts the winding down of our riding season, this is a time many riders look forward to. A time to enjoy great riding with cooler temps and colorful scenic rides. There are a few things to consider when getting on the road, though... Keep these in mind as you venture out.



The downside of wonderful colors comes falling leaves. We could see the Leaves start to fall in as little as 30 days. As the leaves start falling they blow around and start piling up on lawns driveways and roads causing many road hazards. This is the downside of the vibrant colored leaves.

Many assume wet leaves offer less traction than dry. This may or may not be true. The real question is how dry are the leaves. Leaves hold moisture and as they start to decay they generate more moisture. The leaves on top may appear dry and blowing around. However the leaves underneath, on the road surface, may be wet and starting to decay causing very slippery oily grease like conditions. This is very dangerous especially when accelerating, stopping and cornering. When riding you always do your best to avoid oil on the road. Likewise, you should do your best to avoid leaves.



Another serious condition caused by falling leaves is the covering and camouflaging of road hazards. What may appear to be a small pile of leaves may not be a pile at all but in fact a few leaves covering an obstruction on the road such as a rock, stick, or chunk of asphalt. Patches of leaves may also cover other serious road obstructions such as potholes, large cracks, and uneven road surfaces. All of these serious obstructions could cause you to lose control of your motorcycle. The best thing to do while enjoying all the beauty of a fall ride is to make an effort to avoid riding through those tempting piles and patches of leaves.

Timing is also a consideration as the days start to get shorter. The glare of the sun which sets lower in the horizon can be distracting, even with quality sunglasses. Be certain that the bulbs in your headlights, brake lights and turn signals are all working. Reduce your speed and take the time for extra breaks to give your eyes a chance to rest.

Deer migration and mating season. Autumn is mating and migration season for deer. For that reason, the roads are likely to be filled with more deer, making riders more likely to collide with them. Use extra caution to watch for deer, especially at dusk and nighttime.



Cold tires. For riders with sporty tires, fall is a dangerous season to be riding. Sportier tires have much softer rubber than touring tires. In the cold weather we see in fall, these tires become hard and lose traction. Be sure to reduce your speed and ride with extra caution.

So get out and enjoy fall and all the beautiful colors and scenic rides... Ride Safe Be Safe