

Fall Weather Riding Tips

Fall has arrived in the Southlands! Here are a few tips to keep you safe:

Know your skill level: Riding a motorcycle is a physical and mental skill, and can diminish if you haven't ridden in a while. Take so time to get reacquainted with your bike if it's been some time since your last ride.

Hazard Awareness: Your nice relaxing ride through the country should be fun but you have to maintain a constant state of awareness. If you try to identify every hazard you see when ride, there will not be any surprises. When identifying potential hazards, there are no wrong answers. Call out everything: driveway, intersection, children, dogs, parked cars, oncoming line of cars, blind curve, deer, gravel, construction, potholes, etc. This exercise will both help you prepare and force you to scan beyond your normal boundaries.

Wet Weather: If you ride your motorcycle, you are going to get wet. Riding in the rain can be done safely if you follow a few simple rules. Keep rain gear with you, if you have room. Keep a pair of clear glasses or wear a helmet shield of some type. Keeping the rain out of your eyes is imperative. Adjust your riding speed for the conditions. Keep in mind, when it rains for the first time after an extended dry period, there will be excessive amounts of oil on the road, making conditions extremely slick. Watch for standing water.

Frost/Ice: Temperatures on a fall day in Georgia can fluctuate 20 or more degrees. Midday temperatures may be warm and comfortable, while overnight temperatures may be near freezing. It is necessary to be aware of frost and ice on the roadway in the early morning during this time of year. Be sure to pay particular attention for frost/ice on bridges and overpasses, as well as shady areas where the morning sun might not have melted the frost yet.

Falling Leaves: When fall sets in, the falling leaves can present an unassuming hazard. Many people venture out to the North Georgia Mountains to see the fall colors, presenting new hazards. Drivers may be a little distracted and not paying attention to the road or you. Fallen leaves can accumulate on the road and become very slick. Wet or dry, stacks of leaves can reduce traction making it difficult to stop.

Deer Season: While fall riding can present unique hazards, none are as challenging as deer season. Between crops being harvested, hunters in the woods, and breeding season, the deer are much more active than normal. The best defense is to stay aware, particularly in rural areas, scan the roadway and just off the shoulders and watch for deer crossings. Typically, deer movement will peak at dusk and dawn. Areas where crops or wooded areas are close to the road will present the greatest challenge because these are ideal places for deer to cross and provide you the shortest reaction time.

North Georgia is especially beautiful riding during the fall; please be safe and aware of the potential hazards unique to this time of year. Enjoy the ride!

Chuck Watwood
LawBike.com
770-650-0016