

Safety Corner

Keeping it Safe (Winter Riding)

By Jason Cook

Let me start off by saying I am not in the Polar Bear Club but I do ride when I get the chance. Yes, that means in the winter too, as do a lot of riders. There's just something about having to prep my bike for the winter that I can't stand. My bike is not a bear and I don't intend to put it in hibernation. I like to think of it this way. If a nice day happens upon me and I want to go for a ride, all that's needed is to get dressed, start the bike and GO. If you're like me and don't put the bike away due to the occasional nice day, here are some personal tips:

- Preparation of yourself is just as important as your bike. Make sure you are up for the ride.
- Cover up any exposed skin. Wind-chill will put a damper on things real quick.
- Do a really good T-CLOCK inspection. If your tires are worn, maybe you should put the ride off till new ones shod.
- Stop frequently. I know, you're out to ride but the cold takes it toll on your energy and alertness. Also, if you're getting up there in age, stiffness starts to set in.
- Watch out for black ice. Just like in fall and early spring, shaded areas are notorious for moisture, moisture that causes black ice.
- Don't be in a hurry. Tires take longer to warm up and still don't get up to proper temps.
- Last tip...Just Enjoy the Ride.

When I was stationed in Germany my bike would sit maybe two weeks without

being ridden. Reason, the roads were taken care of so much better there. That's not to say I haven't ridden here in the winter. Here are some questions to think about before the ride;

Are me and bike ready for the ride?
Do I have the proper clothing without being bundled up so much I can't move?
How well are the roads maintained in my area?
Do they use salt or sand?

Something to seriously consider is the last one. We know salt is bad because it leaves white powder everywhere and causes metal to rust but think about the alternative that sand can leave you with. If you are riding on salt just laid down then yes, it can be just as dangerous. Salt melts, sand stays and is in the worst places for motorcycles; corners, stops and mostly everywhere we ride. Anyway, not to bring down anyone's winter riding. I have went on long enough so until next time. Stay warm, stay safe and don't become a statistic.