

Cold Weather Riding



By Mark Manley
Safety Officer
Tips and Tricks

Cold weather can be enjoyable and it can also be miserable not to mention dangerous if you're not dressed well enough for it.

As much as this subject has been covered I won't bore you with hypothermia and what it can do to you, how to recognize it, etc., etc.. Instead I'd like to take a little different approach. Everyone that rides has had it drummed into them to layer up, we know about the heated gear which is the best way to go if you can afford it, the thermal underwear, Under Armor is an excellent product, the list goes on.

More times out of many layering up will suffice. Here's something to remember the longer you ride the more your clothes become cold soaked so here's something to think about.

If you have a touring bike or a cruiser with saddle bags you probably throw some extra clothes in just for in case of's, right? Wind and wind chill is a riders enemy, so



wind proofing is essential. Here's some tips and tricks if you forgot to bring extra gear or don't have saddle bags to store extra stuff or have a windscreen on your bike. Since we ride back roads mostly I doubt you'll find a WalMart in the woods but odds are you will find some kind of convenient store so stop and get something hot to drink, while doing that put your McGyver on and look around you'd be surprised what you can find.

Here's some things to look for, a news paper or garbage bags both are excellent insulators to put between your outer and inner layer. The next item (if you carry a first aid kit, usually has a pair in it) is surgical gloves, put these

on over your glove liners if you use them then put your gloves on, the next thing to get (I did this on a long ride back from Houston, Tx.) is a watch cap (beanie) or two ask the clerk for a pair of scissors and cut the top out of it, instant balaclava and face mask a must if you don't have a full face helmet.

Even if you have a balaclava this is added protection. For your feet ask for two plastic bags they put your stuff in, pull your boots off put the bags over your feet and put your boots back on (it worked!) Lastly buy a Gatorade preferably one at room temperature, so if you start cramping up this will relieve them fairly quick.

Everyone is different some are "thermally gifted" and can handle the cold better than others, I fall into the latter! The point of this article is if you don't think you need it, bring it. If you don't, know how to adapt in a pinch.

Mark