

SAFETY CORNER

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LOOKING AHEAD OF THE FOG

I think everyone has experienced fog, although there are different types of fog. Essentially fog is a cloud on the ground which reduces visibility to less than 1/3 of a mile.

During early winter the most common form of fog is radiation fog. This type of fog forms when the land cools after sunset by radiating the heat up into the atmosphere. The air must be calm and the skies clear because cloud cover traps the heat in. When the ground is cool, it will cause condensation in the air above it. The more calm the air, the lower the fog is, under ideal conditions.

Fog can sometimes be accompanied by drizzle when the humidity stays above 100%. When the temperatures are below freezing the drizzle will freeze producing very hazardous driving conditions. Many people find fog beautiful, but no one can deny it is a visibility hazard. Before radar, fog caused many collisions. Cars, trucks, and motorcycles however, don't have radar and use extra caution driving through fog. Localized fog is especially dangerous to unwary drivers when it appears suddenly.

For those of you that have high performance lighting upgrades and appear like a fireball coming down the road, fog can severely reduce visibility due to reflection. The risk of overdriving your visibility, particularly at night, can bring that big machine down to a crawl.

You have heard not to drive your motorcycle with the high beams on in the fog. Slow down and if the conditions are bad enough, get off the road.

Craig