

Traffic Safety Newsletter



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Cold Weather Riding Gear

Having the "Right Stuff" is Essential for Comfort and Safety

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It's a beautiful sunny winter day and you are itching to get your leg across the saddle. However, it could be quite a bit colder than what you normally ride in. At what temperature is it too cold to ride safely and comfortably?

Comfort levels are different for every rider, but something that is the same for all of us is wind chill. Is 30 degrees too cold to ride? Well, at that temperature, riding at 60 mph feels like 10 degrees, and at 70 mph the wind chill nears 0 degrees! Having the right gear in these conditions is critical. Do you have the "right stuff"?

Dressing appropriately and accessorizing your motorcycle with a few gadgets can vastly improve your ability to stay warm, keep focus on the road, and perform smooth and well-timed actions. A short list of the right stuff includes: cold-weather gloves, wind proof motorcycle jacket, wind protection for legs, neck protection, face mask, full-face helmet, and heated accessories.

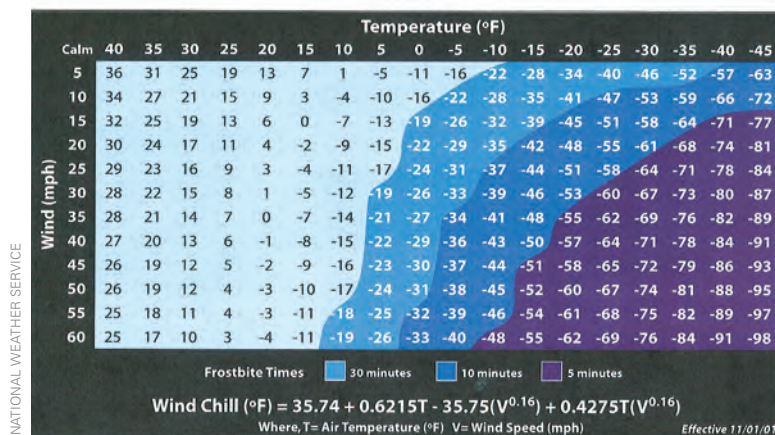
A good motorcycle jacket may be somewhat expensive, but will be worth the cost in the long run. (An option is to check used motorcycle gear consignment shops — practically new gear may be found on their shelves for much less than retail.) Look for leather or synthetic jackets with padding, a warm liner, and durable construction. A zip-out liner and vented underarms, as well as straps and buckles at the wrists and waist are expected features in a quality jacket. Before putting on your jacket, you should layer your clothing. Thin undergarments, a layer



Wind chill (commonly called the wind chill factor) is the felt air temperature on exposed skin due to wind.

of thermal underwear, and a shirt and pants that have synthetic fibers to wick away moisture can prevent a chill from setting in. These are available in most department stores and on the web. Choose the thickness for the weather conditions you anticipate. It's a good idea to add a layer more than you think you need, especially if it could be removed at a stopping point if you become too warm.

A wind-breaking layer will keep the insulated underwear working properly. A pair of leather chaps or winter riding pants will keep your legs warm. If conditions are severe, you can put on your rain gear to further break the wind and shield you from the cold.



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The feet and hands are often the first to feel the effects of the cold. Thin silk or microfiber liners under your leather gloves are a good option. Long, gauntlet style gloves that cover your wrist and jacket sleeves can help break the wind as well as keep your hands protected. Motorcycle boots should not be too tight and provide room to wear a heavy pair of socks. Boot height is important in cold weather — they should be well above your ankles to provide a barrier from the cold and wind. Keep in mind that steel-toed work boots will conduct the cold right into your toes.




A neck gaiter or scarf around your neck, along with a full-face helmet, is the best for warmth. A hat underneath the helmet can also help keep you warm; a balaclava type helmet hood is a cheap but excellent addition.



Paying attention to proper dress and attire for cold weather riding can enhance your experience, and aid in keeping you attentive and safe on the ride.

For those who ride a lot in even colder temperatures, heated gadgets are your best friends. Electrically heated grips can be as simple as a “grip wrap” tape that attaches with Velcro around your existing grips and plug into your bike. Heated replacement grips with a rheostat controller are available. Vests, pants, gloves and socks that plug directly into the bike’s electrics, as well as heated seat pads, will warm the core of your body as well as your extremities.



So, if you really want to ride safely in a cold environment, do some research and acquire the appropriate gear to make each ride as comfortable as possible. 

Winter Riding Strategies

- **Don't Get Foggy.** Visor fogging can be a real problem during cold weather. Wear a half-mask inside your helmet over a wind-proof balaclava, which allows your breath to escape without causing condensation.
- **Watch the Voltage.** Check your owner's manual to see if your alternator generates enough wattage to handle electric accessories, such as heated vests and gloves, and run lights and other electrical components, with some to spare.
- **Get Streamlined.** Direct chilly air away from your body by adding a functional, not just cosmetic, windshield. Your height and torso length will dictate the proper height of the windshield, which should be just below your line of sight.
- **Don't Get Fooled.** Hypothermia is insidious. If you ignore early symptoms, like uncontrolled shivering and numb fingers or toes, slow reaction times, or fuzzy thinking, you could get into trouble, fast. Make sure you stop frequently, enjoy a hot beverage and allow your body to warm up.
- **Practice Tire Smarts.** If you fit sticky race-type tires in the summer, be sure to switch back to ordinary street tires during colder months. They develop grip at lower temperatures and reach effective operating temperatures much more quickly.
- **Put Your Oil on a Diet.** Using thinner oil during the cold months will improve your bike's performance, especially during start-up, but check your owner's manual for recommendations. Some manufacturers recommend only one weight of oil for all seasons.
- **Rev Up Your Insurance IQ.** Make sure your insurance policy allows for year-round riding. Many premiums for motorcycles already take into consideration the variances in use throughout the year. Accordingly, a discount for limited use off-season is already reflected. However, if your policy requires your bike be laid up during certain months, you may not be as protected as you think.

SOURCE: NATIONWIDE INSURANCE AND MOTORCYCLE-USA.COM



Traffic Safety Resolutions for 2013

The importance of traffic safety is well known to most of us. Through training, education, and news media we have come to understand the role we play in protecting ourselves, our family, and the community. With each new year we should resolve to put more of our knowledge into actual practice on a daily basis. Here is a list of some suggested Traffic Safety Resolutions for 2013:

- **Adjust mirror properly.** If you can see your car in your side mirrors, you may not have your side mirrors adjusted properly. Proper adjustment can reduce your BLIND SPOT significantly, also reducing the chances of a side collision. <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KwzUE6PHk4U>.



To properly set your side mirrors set them so your visibility closely resembles this illustration, where you cannot see any of your vehicle in the side view mirror. Like anything new, it will take some time to adjust

to the changed mirror setting, but avoiding a collision is worth the effort.

- **Place hands properly** on the steering wheel and, more importantly, know why. Due to air bags, it is now safer to place your hands at either the 9 and 3 position of a clock, or even the 8 and 4 position. The 10 and 2 position can pose a threat of injury if the air bag deploys. <http://www.nbcnews.com/business/get-times-youre-driving-all-wrong-518710>
- **Do not use cruise control while driving in the rain.** This can cause loss of control if your tires begin to hydroplane and the cruise control continues to accelerate.
- **Drive with headlights on during the day.** Doing this increases your visibility to oncoming traffic and can reduce your chances of a head on collision.

- **Move Over.** You can be ticketed if you are doing the speed limit as you pass a police, rescue or tow truck driver who is stopped and has their emergency lights on. If you cannot move over, you are required to slow down 20 MPH under the posted speed limit as you pass the vehicles. Read your state statute for more specific details: <http://www.moveoveramerica.com/>



- **Keep the phone number of a designated driver service with you** if there is any chance that you could drive and then drink. Most military bases have programs in place; contact your Safety Office **in advance**. There are also programs in 44 states that offer a free ride or tow of your vehicle if you are too drunk to drive. Visit this site to locate a service in your county: <http://www.drinkinganddriving.org/tools/services.html>

- **Switch to a full-face helmet** if you ride. The figures on the helmet illustrations below are impact percentages taken from a European study of crash simulations, which suggest that full-face helmets protect areas that other motorcycle helmets do not in 44% of collisions. More protection is better! 🏍️



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SAFETIPS

Winterizing Your Car

If you don't have to drive in snow, sleet, or ice—don't! But if you must, winter driving exposes you to risks such as slower traffic, hazardous road conditions, hot tempers, and unforeseen dangers. To help you make it safely through winter, here are some suggestions from the National Safety Council to make sure that you and your vehicle are prepared.

Weather

At any temperature - whether it's 20 degrees Fahrenheit, below zero, or 90 degrees Fahrenheit - weather affects road and driving conditions and can pose serious problems. It is important to listen to forecasts on radio, TV, cable weather channel, or forecasts in the daily papers.

Your Car

Prepare your car for winter. Start with a checkup that includes:

- Checking the ignition, brakes, wiring, hoses and fan belts.
- Changing and adjusting the spark plugs.
- Checking the air, fuel and emission filters, and the PCV valve.
- Inspecting the distributor.
- Checking the battery.
- Checking the tires for air, sidewall wear and tread depth.
- Checking antifreeze level and the freeze line.

- Your car should have a tune-up (check the owner's manual for the recommended interval) to ensure better gas mileage, quicker starts and faster response on pick-up and passing power.



Necessary Equipment

An emergency situation on the road can arise at any time and you must be prepared. After completing your car's winter checkup, make sure the trunk contains:

- A properly inflated spare tire, wheel wrench and tripod-type jack
- A shovel
- Jumper cables
- Tow and tire chains
- A bag of salt or cat litter
- Tool kit

Essential Supplies

Be prepared with a survival kit that should always remain in the car. Replenish after use. Essential supplies include:

- Working flashlight and extra batteries
- Reflective triangles and brightly-colored cloth
- Compass



- First aid kit
- Exterior windshield cleaner
- Ice scraper and snow brush
- Wooden stick matches in a waterproof container
- Scissors and string/cord
- Non-perishable, high energy foods like unsalted canned nuts, dried fruits, and hard candy
- In addition, if you are driving long distances under cold, snowy, and icy conditions, you should also carry supplies to keep you warm, such as heavy woolen mittens, socks, a cap, and blankets.

If You Become Stranded

- Do not leave your car unless you know exactly where you are, how far it is to possible help, and are certain you will improve your situation.
- To attract attention, light two flares and place one at each end of the car a safe distance away. Hang a brightly colored cloth from your antenna.
- If you are sure the car's exhaust pipe is not blocked, run the engine and heater for about 10 minutes every hour or so depending upon the amount of gas in the tank.
- To protect yourself from frostbite and hypothermia, use the woolen items and blankets to keep warm.
- Keep at least one window open slightly. Heavy snow and ice can seal a car shut.
- Eat a hard candy to keep your mouth moist.

Good Choices

Aren't Always So Obvious

**SEAT BELT
OPTIONAL!**

**RIDE AT
OWN RISK!**



**FASTEN YOUR
SEAT BELTS**

**ENJOY
THE RIDE!**



Buckle Up
It Only Takes a Second



Regional/host commanders provide COMNAVSAFECEN-approved traffic safety training at no cost to all military and DON civilian personnel seeking on-base driving privileges. Contact your command Safety Office for availability.

