Wet Weather Riding

A surprising number of riders are apprehensive about riding in the wet. These are typical of comments heard on the subject.

- "I'm worried about losing the front end."
- "I don't have ABS and I'm worried about locking up the wheels."
- "I just don't have any confidence in these tyres in the wet"
- "I have no idea how much grip I've actually got"
- "I don't ride in the wet because I get very tense and don't enjoy it"

This download will examine the most common concerns and suggest some solutions.

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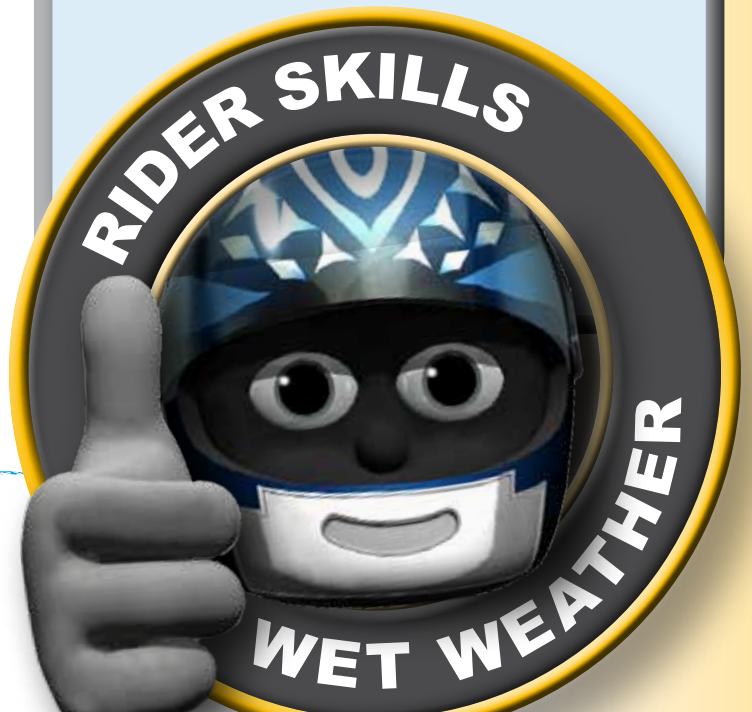
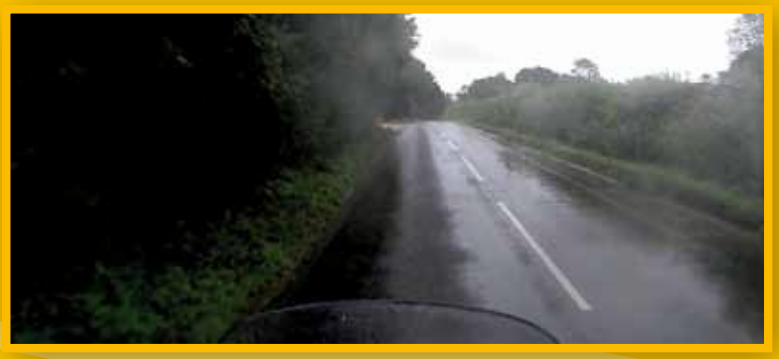
Hugger

Please note: THIS DOWNLOAD IS NOT AIMED AT LEARNER MOTORCYCLISTS, although some of the advice may be just as relevant. We would recommend that learners discuss the issues of wet weather riding with their instructor to seek advice appropriate to their level of experience and to ensure compliance with DSA requirements for the test.

Disclaimer – The information contained in this download is provided in good faith and based on established information in the public domain and elements taken from the police Roadcraft manual. Norfolk County Council accepts no responsibility for any damage or injury howsoever caused by following this advice.



Wet Weather



Wet weather riding causes concern for a surprising number of riders. Whilst such concerns are rational, they are mostly borne out of a lack of confidence in the capabilities of the bike, lack of faith in the amount of grip available from the tyres, or the skid resistance of the road surface. There may be a lack of confidence in the riders' own ability to deal with a situation that they may not regularly encounter.

Many riders use their bikes as a means of transport all year round, either through choice or necessity. For them, riding in the wet is not a problem and many find it an enjoyable challenge, a case of mastering the conditions.

A lot of social riders, however, are not quite so enthusiastic at riding in the wet. For them, the onset of wet weather can introduce apprehension or tension into their ride that, whilst understandable, is mostly unfounded and can be addressed through training and applying the correct techniques.

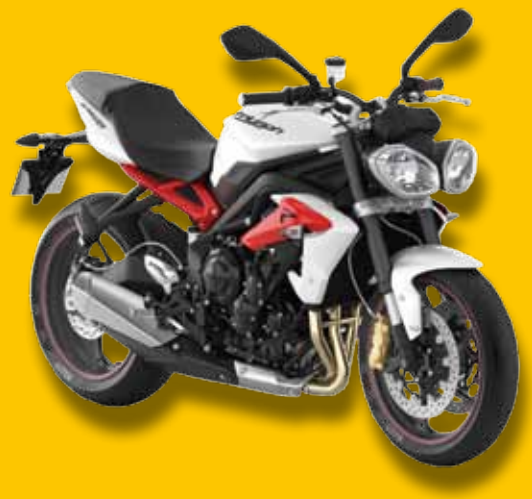
If you are one of these riders, this download may help you but all riders might benefit from reading it, you never know what you might pick up.

Any fear about riding in the wet is likely to be because of **how the rider feels** about the conditions rather than the bikes ability to deal with them. For example, it shouldn't require any high level of skill to handle braking in the wet, it should be no more difficult than in the dry, it just needs a little more time which is where Roadcraft skills come in.

With cornering, your speed may need to be reduced compared to the dry, but sound observation and planning skills should mean a safe, smooth and secure route through the corners.

A simple example of where Roadcraft skills will make your ride easier would be in avoiding running over service inspection covers on bends. Riders often complain about badly positioned inspection covers but they are there to be seen and avoided with the right application of simple Roadcraft observation and planning principles.

The bike will probably cope with running over the cover but how the rider feels about that prospect and his/her reaction to it will make a big difference to how the bike behaves as it runs over it. It's negative rider input that will make the difference. However, why run over it at all if you don't need to?



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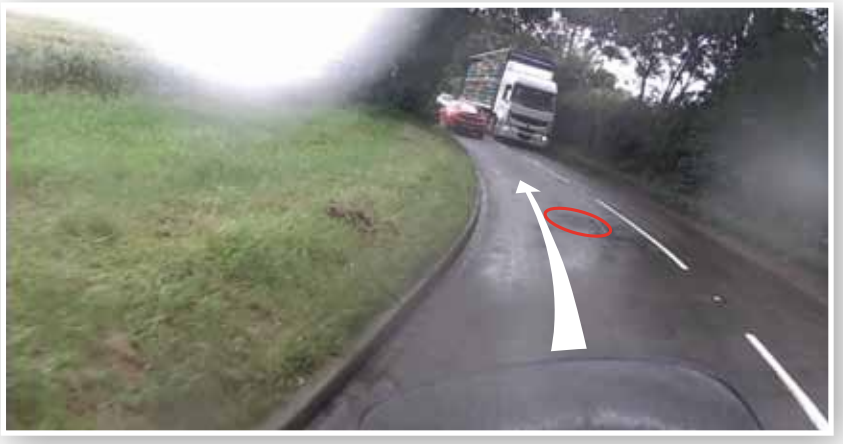
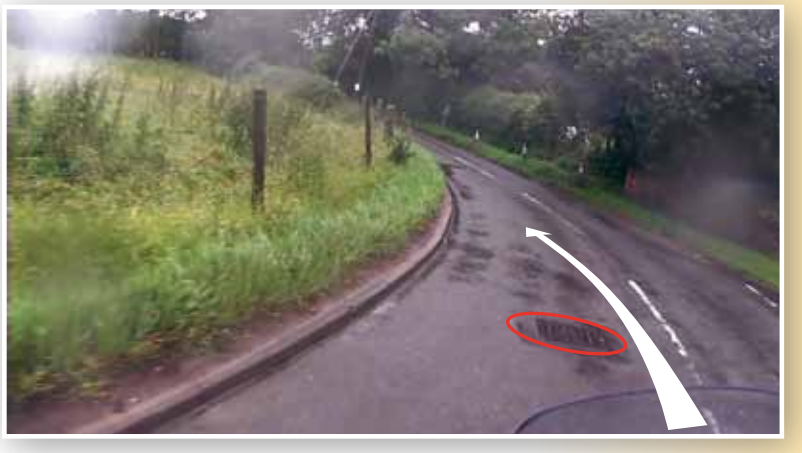
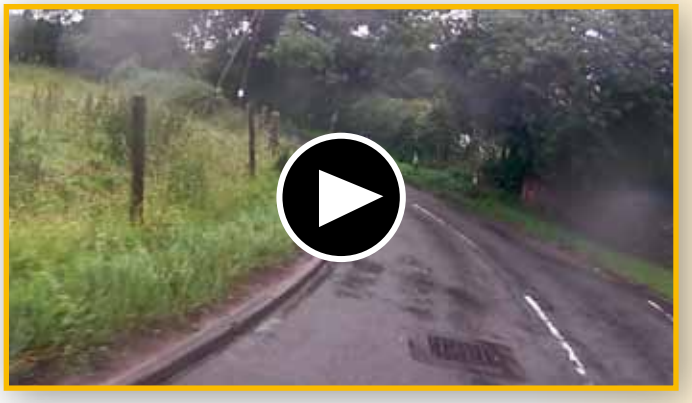


In this photo, the smooth metal inspection cover is on the line the motorcyclist would normally take in the dry (in the absence of oncoming vehicles) and has been spotted at an early stage.

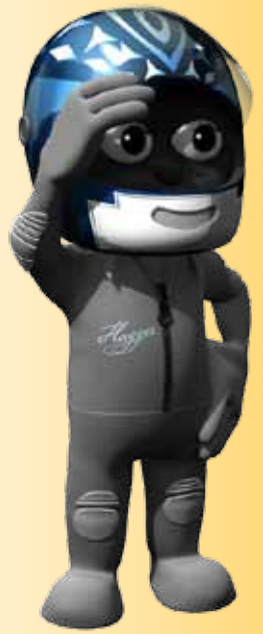
- Going to the right of it would be dangerous with the oncoming goods vehicle.
- Running over it whilst banked over has the potential to cause the bike to slip off line and make the rider feel very uncomfortable with the presence of the oncoming vehicle.
- By spotting it early enough the rider is able to smoothly take a route avoiding it completely, to the left.



In this photo the rider has sufficient vision to see that there are no oncoming vehicles to cause a problem so a line to the right of the covers is perfectly safe and increases visibility into the bend. Why cross over them banked over if you don't have to?



Video - 'Early observation and planning to avoid inspection covers on bends'



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Wet Weather Riding

Good News – none of this is rocket science!

Spotting Road Surface Problems

Being aware of the condition of the road surface and spotting potential problems is a key element of wet weather riding and falls into the category of **observation and planning** as mentioned in our download on the subject.

Being able to spot potential problems in time to do something about it makes a **huge difference** to your confidence when riding in the wet. This requires concentration and a scanning technique moving the focus of your vision to include the road surface at a distance where you can do something about it. If you are focussing on the road too close to your front wheel, you may not have the time to plan a route to avoid any hazards ahead. Tension is likely to drop your vision closer to your bike, make sure you relax and scan well ahead.

Watch out for…

Conditions when a wet road surface can be expected to be slippery. These are just a few examples.

Metal Inspection Covers on a Bend

As mentioned, metal inspection covers may be a source of concern to a number of riders, but they are not really an issue when your bike is upright and travelling in a straight line unless you are braking heavily or accelerating harshly on one. They are, however, best avoided if possible when leaned over on a bend as the cover surface is likely to have a much lower skid resistance than the surrounding tarmac unless it is a specialist high skid resistance cover which is rare. The covers are there to be seen and planned around if you are observing and scanning properly and riding at an appropriate speed for the conditions. If you end up running over a cover banked over, ask yourself why you failed to spot it until so late. If you are not riding too quickly for the circumstances, a momentary lapse in concentration will be the most likely answer.

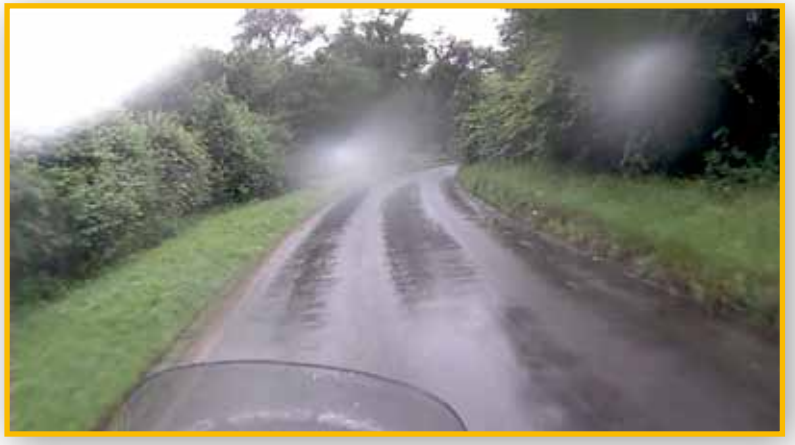
Because we make mistakes…

Good observation should allow you to spot the cover early enough and take a route around it. If, for whatever reason, you find yourself unable to avoid running over one on a bend, it doesn't mean that a major slide is inevitable.

- Relax - don't tense up.
- Don't grip the bars and lock your arms in anticipation of movement, keep a light grip and remain relaxed.
- Be very gentle with the throttle and steering, keep it smooth.
- If the bike does move a little, allow it time to recover without making the situation worse by braking fiercely or gripping tightly onto the bars.

Worn Road Surfaces

Worn road surfaces need to be considered in your riding plans, particularly in the wet with repaired patches, potholes, and so forth added to the mix. One issue to consider is the variable skid resistance caused by normal wear and tear.



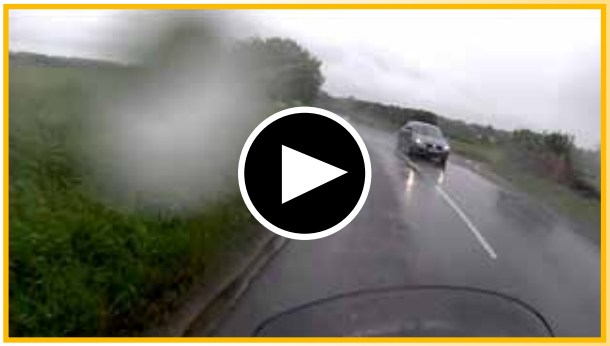
This photo shows polished areas of the wheel tracks.

It is quite common to find worn, polished tracks created by four wheeled vehicles. In some circumstances, normally on main roads, the degree of wear is such that noticeable depressions form and water collects in these channels where regular large goods vehicle traffic has increased the wear rate.

If there is no debris or contamination preventing it, taking a line nearer to the centre of their half of the carriageway may give riders a bit more grip because the tyres are on a surface with a higher skid resistance and potentially having to displace less water than on the worn tracks.

This should give a greater feeling of security and confidence than riding on the worn tracks. If the rider is smooth, there may still be adequate grip on the worn track but the skid resistance is unlikely to be as high as the area where there are still visible granite chips set into the surface. It may be that this central track is not far enough away from a nearside or offside hazard in which case you need to adjust position further. Safety always comes first and if you remain smooth you should comfortably be able to ride on the worn tracks if the centre is not the best option.

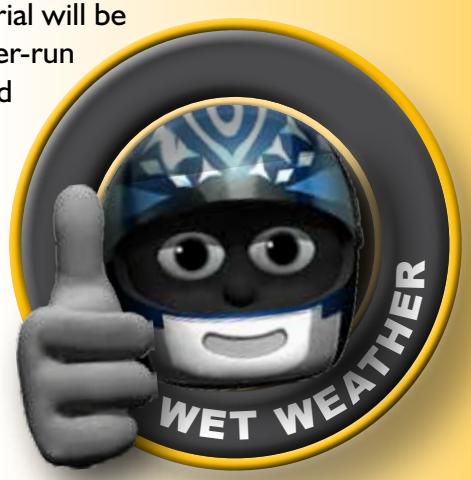
An American study by Northwestern University Traffic Institute in the 1990s indicated a reduction in skid resistance on a wet road between a 'travelled surface' and a 'polished-travelled surface' of between 11% and 38%.



Video - Positioning for best grip

Mud/Grit

On minor country roads in particular, mud, gravel, sand and so forth can be realistically expected. Loose material will be washed off the banks and large vehicles will over-run the banks dragging more material onto the road surface. With this possibility in mind, the rider needs to ride at a speed that these hazards can be spotted in time and dealt with. In rural counties mud is an ever present problem during winter harvests.



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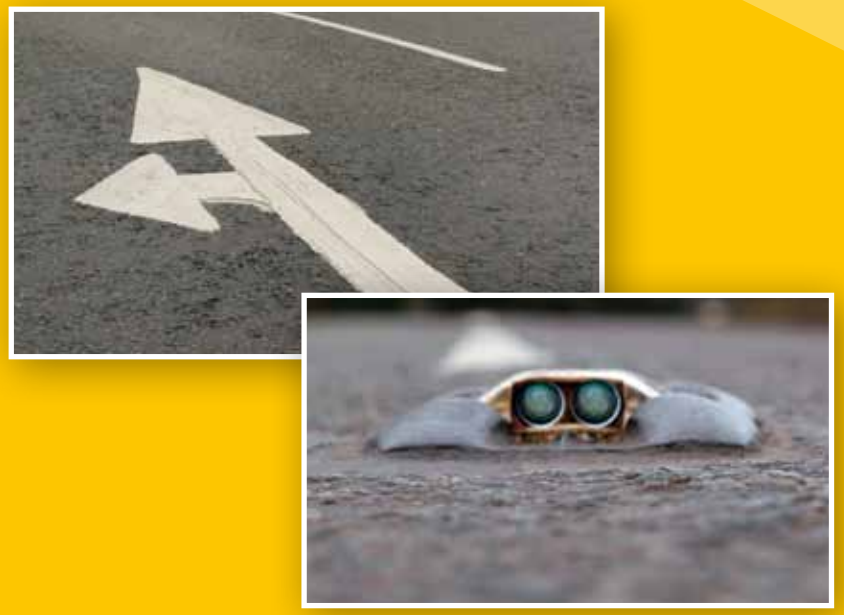
Long Dry Spells

After a long dry spell it is widely expected that the first rain will result in potentially very slippery conditions when the oil, rubber and dirt that has accumulated on the road surface is mixed to create a potentially hazardous environment, a white foam sometimes being visible. You know what to expect, so ride accordingly.

Cats Eyes, Road Paint & Overbanding

Most road 'paint' isn't actually paint but a thermoplastic material that sits proud of the road surface and can be uneven and slippery when wet, particularly if it has been overlaid with more material as below. The lines and cats eyes need to be considered when cornering in the wet and try and avoid having to brake on them.

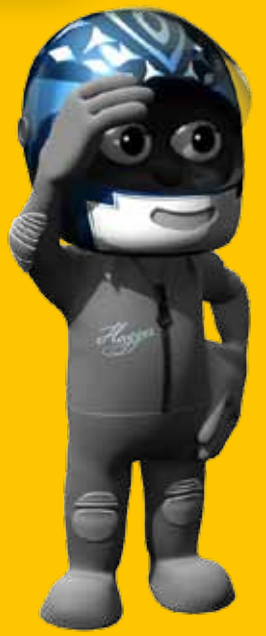


Overbanding is the black bitumen sealing strip around road patching and can also be very slippery when wet. This is generally no longer used, the sealing is now applied to the sides of the repair trench before the replacement tarmac is laid in rather than to the surface joint afterwards but you may encounter overbanding on some older repairs.

Oil & Fuel Deposits

At traffic light junctions in particular, care needs to be taken to avoid the possibility of braking heavily on the centre of the lane where the oil and fuel deposits tend to gather from stationary vehicles. This area can be very slippery when mixed with water. Aim to brake to one side or the other, if you have to brake in a hurry as the lights change you will appreciate this early planning!

The area near petrol stations is another well known and obvious location to be very careful as are roundabouts where fuel can be deposited from vehicles with missing fuel caps or fuel overspill from the top of goods vehicle fuel tanks. In reality expect to find it anywhere.



Leaf Mould

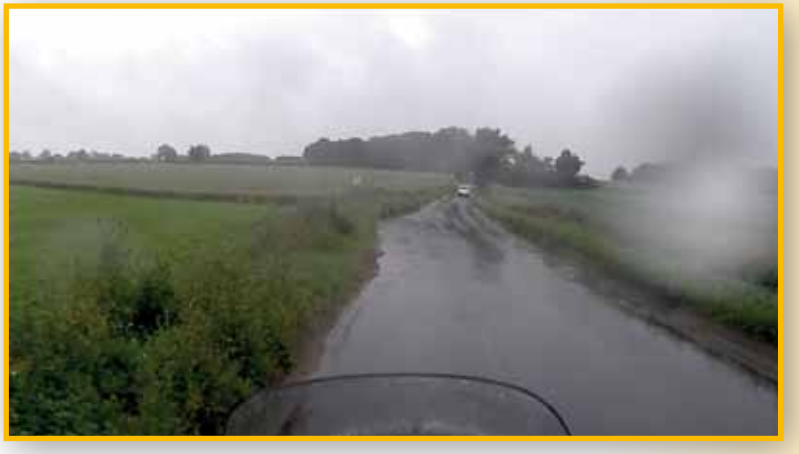
This is obviously a seasonal problem but wet leaves can be an issue for motorcyclists on a bend or if braking firmly as they can significantly reduce grip levels. If you need to brake on wet leaf mould be very careful with the brakes, if it is appropriate consider changing down using the gears, using the engine back pressure to slow you down. Go down one gear at a time, carefully matching your gear to the road speed of the bike if firm application of the brakes is likely to induce a skid. Consider showing a brake light if you have vehicles behind you.

Use of the gears to slow down is not generally good riding practice increasing wear and tear on the bike but in circumstances like this, or on ice or snow, losing speed using the brakes needs a very delicate touch and using the gears is a sound technique. If your bike is fitted with a slipper clutch the retardation available from the engine will be reduced.

As for riding in ice or snow, avoid it if you possibly can, it's a risky business. It's not the falling off so much as what you hit or what runs over you that determines the outcome! If it's icy or snowy enough for you to fall off, car drivers will not be in full control either and fatalities have resulted in these circumstances.

Puddles and Deep Surface Water

Puddles may conceal deep pot holes, avoid them if you can, if you can't, reduce your speed. Deep surface water should be negotiated carefully to reduce the risk of aquaplaning. Aquaplaning occurs at a point where the tread depth is no longer capable of moving the water from beneath the tyre, obviously worsened by a low tread depth or too low tyre pressures. At this point a wedge of water forms beneath the tyre and breaks the contact between the tyre and the road surface meaning a skid is inevitable.



You have no idea what the puddle to the nearside might conceal…

It might be a pothole like this!

What else might help?

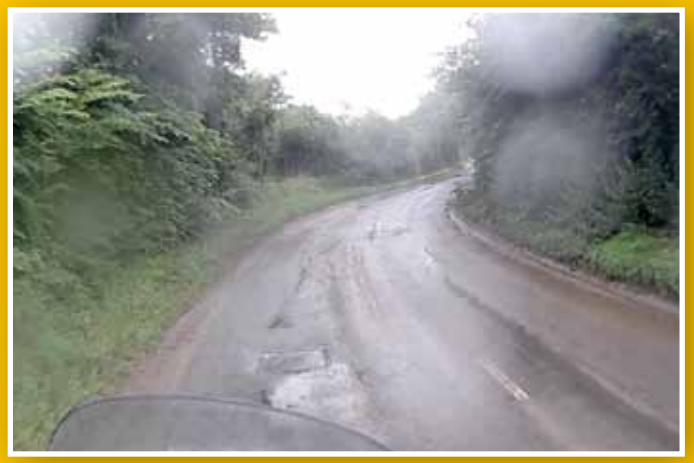
Relax!

This might seem to be easier said than done but if you are tense you will end up fighting the bike when what is required is for you to relax and flow with it.

You need to sit in a relaxed posture with your hands resting lightly on the bars, arms comfortably bent and your back and hips relaxed.

If you have a delicate grip on the bars you should be able to detect any subtle movements or feedback that the bike is giving you. You're not hanging onto a trapeze; a light grip is adequate. If you feel the need to grip anywhere make it with your knees.

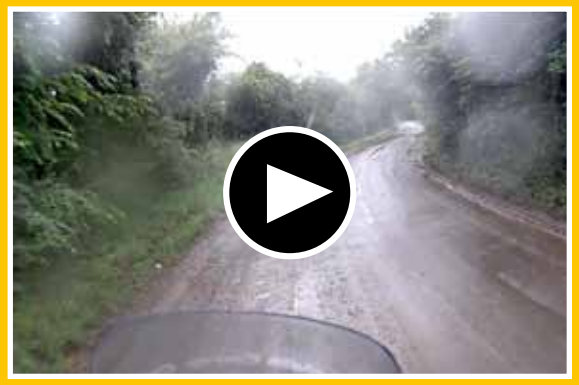
Don't Panic!



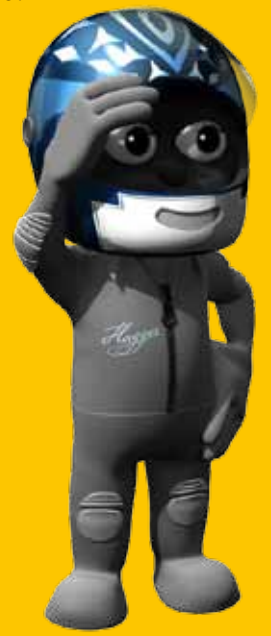
If you come round a bend and find mud, gravel, sand, sunken metal inspection covers on the road ahead of you, stay relaxed, the bike will cope with a lot more than you might think.

In the video below the rider is faced with all of the above and pools of standing water as well as he comes round the bend. Because the speed was appropriate to the dirty conditions he could have stopped had he needed to. However, this was unnecessary and he continued through the hazards without the bike twitching or sliding. **Smoothness** and a belief in the inherent stability of the bike is key.

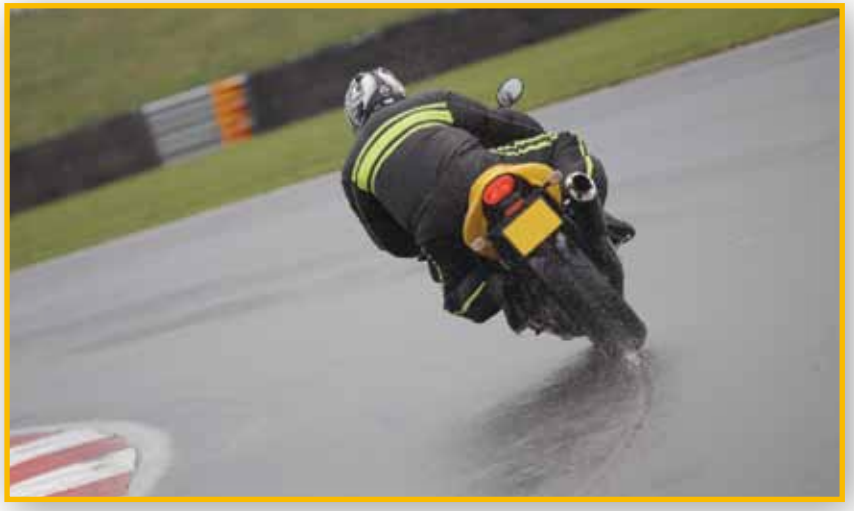
An off road or supermoto training session is probably the best way to convince riders who don't ride in the wet that a small twitch or sideways movement of the bike does not have to turn into a disaster. Often it is the reaction of the rider rather than the actual hazard that causes a minor issue to become a major one.



Video - Rural surface hazards



Smoothly Does It!



Unsurprisingly, one of the key elements to successful wet weather riding is being **smooth**. Riding in the wet tends to expose those riders that are coarse and aggressive with the bike in the dry, from those that are smooth. The smoother rider is much less affected by the change in conditions.

Riding smoothly should be a key objective in all circumstances and it does not mean a boring ride, far from it, police riders are often called upon to ride quickly but they will still remain smooth whilst doing so. Check out our other downloads to see how to corner and overtake smoothly.

Smoothness applies to everything that you do on the bike

- Sensitive, smooth operation of the throttle commensurate with the levels of grip
- Smooth and progressive application of the brakes
- The manner in which you steer the bike
- Body movement on the bike
- The smoothness of your gear changes and selecting an appropriate gear to allow a smooth delivery of torque.

As mentioned in the cornering download, being in **too low** a gear will cause the bike to react harshly or be 'twitchy' to small inputs of throttle. This is likely to become a much bigger problem in the wet with reduced grip levels. Being in **too high** a gear will not enable you to maintain smooth drive and a **constant speed** through the turn because it will not react to the throttle and tend to 'bog-down'.

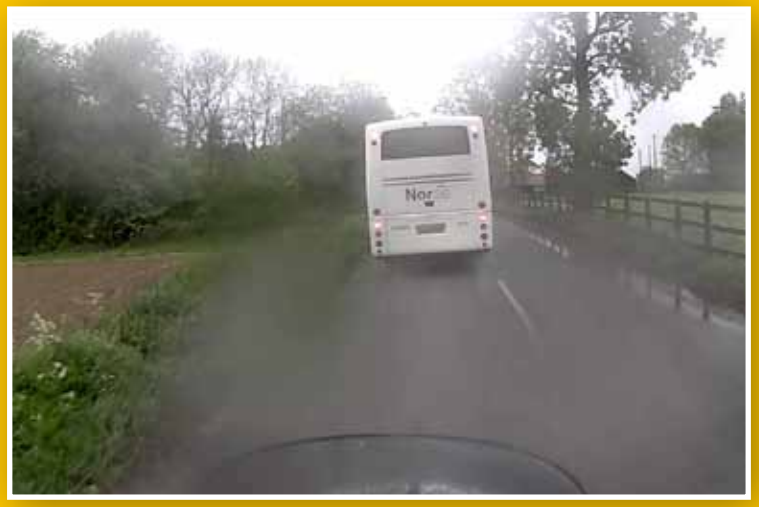
A smooth input of throttle is desirable in all circumstances for which a gear needs to be selected that uses the torque of the engine rather than power that might otherwise risk spinning up the rear wheel. It's subjective but you should know when it feels 'just right'.

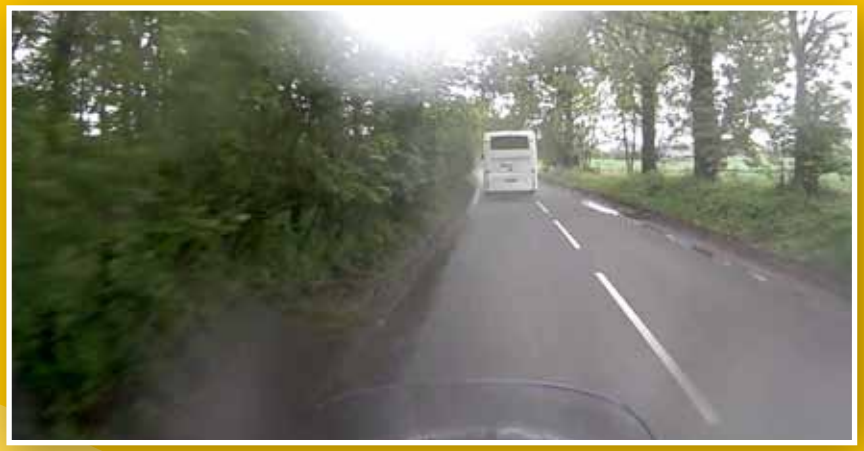
By maintaining a constant speed through the corner, you will avoid loading and unloading the suspension and thereby maintaining a more consistent level of grip.

Keep Your Distance

We covered the issue of keeping your distance in our download on observation and planning where we looked at improvements in vision, stopping distance and safety. In the wet you need to allow yourself more time and distance to brake. With the application of a particular track-derived braking technique the difference in stopping distance between wet and dry is much less than riders might imagine but it is a much better idea to give yourself more time and space for safety and not put the technique to the test. Advanced machine handling skills are no substitute for basic Roadcraft skills.

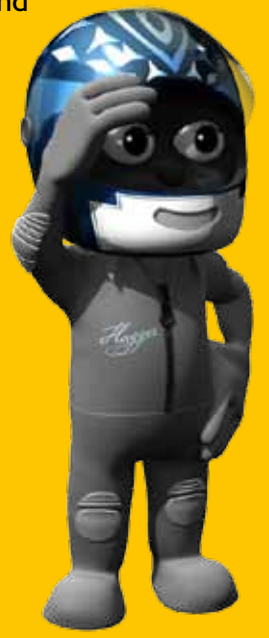
Emergency braking techniques should really only apply in completely unpredictable situations as in all other circumstances Roadcraft observation and planning skills should allow you to spot the potential or developing problem and plan to deal with it earlier giving more time to react.





By being further back, the rider has also got a view down the nearside of the coach.

Keeping a good distance not only increases your safety margin and gives you plenty of time to react; it also gives any vehicle behind you more time to react. This will reduce the risk of you being tail-ended. You will also be less affected by spray from other vehicles, improving your vision ahead. Consider showing a brake light to alert the driver/rider behind to the fact that you are losing speed because you might be able to do so just on deceleration but the person behind may not realise that you are slowing until, and if, your brake light comes on. Your bike will almost certainly decelerate quicker on the throttle than a car.



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A Gripping Yarn!

One of the main concerns raised in relation to riding in the wet, comes from the belief amongst many riders that there is very little grip. Police crash investigators work on a reduction in skid resistance of about 25% from an average dry road to an average wet one so there is clearly less grip.

So how much grip is there?

An impossible question to answer but there is probably adequate grip in most circumstances, barring ice and snow and in the absence of any surface contamination. You do need to be smooth however, apply the right techniques and don't place unreasonable demands on the tyres, making sure that you travel at an appropriate speed for the conditions. Your belief in how much or how little grip there might be and how that makes you feel will impact on your confidence levels.

In the police Roadcraft manual there is a graph showing the principle of tyre grip trade off. Put simply, there is a finite amount of grip available from your tyres. That grip is shared between the accelerating, braking and cornering forces. The more of the available grip that is used for braking or accelerating, the less is available for cornering. This is why, in applying the 'system' correctly, braking is completed before you arrive at the bend and the throttle is applied just enough to stabilise the bike through the turn and not risk breaking traction.

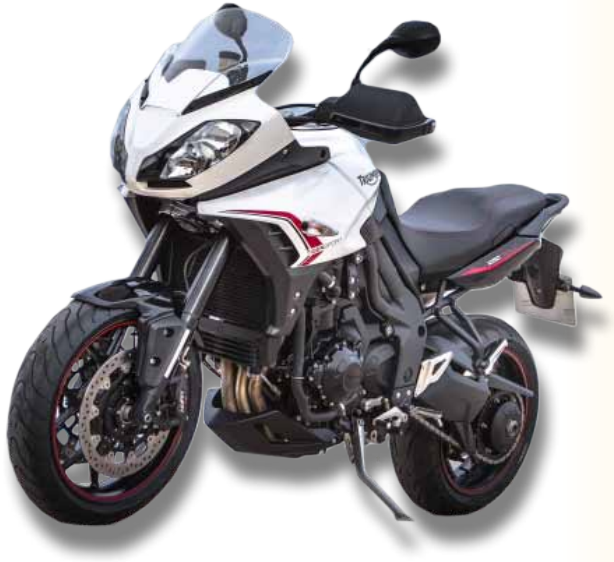
Ride at an appropriate speed and don't place unreasonable demands on tyre grip.

Have you ever skidded?

If you have, you are unlikely to have forgotten it and this will not help to improve your confidence. For example, if you have had a major slide on a roundabout in the wet, there is a strong possibility that you will be tense in those circumstances in future. There is a good chance that the memory of that slide will convince you that is what is likely to happen again. As a result you may become tense, making it more likely to happen, a bit of a self-fulfilling prophesy. The reality is that your actions most probably caused the problem in the first place.

Skids are normally the result of a rider doing something to provoke it, most likely by:

- Coarse or aggressive steering
- Excessive speed for the conditions
- Coarse or aggressive cornering
- Excessive lean angles during cornering
- Harsh acceleration.
- Sudden or excessive braking



If you apply the police system correctly, braking should be sorted out before the corner and only gentle acceleration applied to stabilise the bike through the corner thus leaving plenty of grip for the tyres to negotiate the turn.

Understanding the causes of skidding will mean that you are more likely to avoid it happening.

Front Wheel Skids

Grip is normally broken because of:

- Excessive speed for the conditions
- Excessive lean angles during cornering
- Coarse or aggressive steering input
- Excessive braking

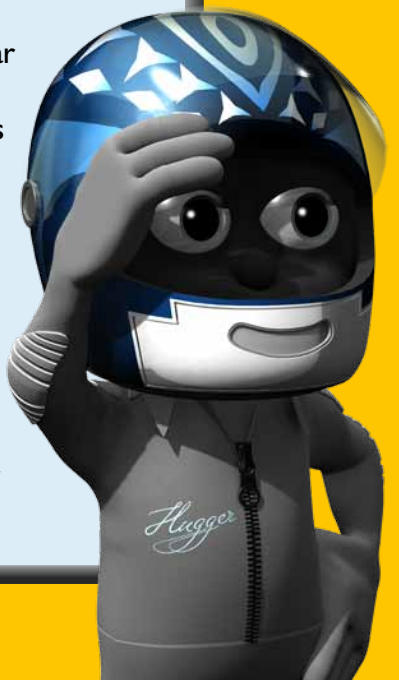
A front wheel skid is much harder to control than a rear wheel one as the time from the point of traction being broken to the wheel stepping out of line can be very short and the rider is likely to make the situation worse by negatively impacting on the steering axis.

Rear Wheel Skids

The reasons grip is normally broken are:

- Excessive speed for the conditions
- Excessive lean angles during cornering
- Harsh acceleration
- Excessive braking
- Failing to match engine and road speed when engaging the clutch (too low a gear for the road speed)

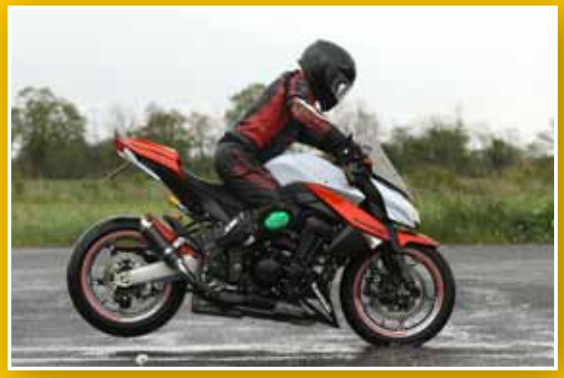
The wheel can swing either way during a rear wheel skid and the rider needs to remove the cause to regain control. Rear wheel skids are common amongst novices that apply the rear brake too hard in an emergency. It's an instinctive panic reaction and one that needs practice to train out. Various techniques to remove the cause can be applied, easing off the throttle or brake smoothly to avoid the tyre suddenly gripping and snapping back causing a high-side throwing the rider off and steering into the skid is another technique.



"I have ABS and TCS, surely the technology will stop skidding from happening won't it?"

Don't count on it.

Emergency braking in the wet
Note the compression of the forks visible between the headlight and front mudguard as the weight transfers forwards and the back wheel has very little weight on it. This is why it is so much easier to lock up the rear wheel during heavy braking without ABS.



Who says there is very little grip in the wet?
Whilst this is not recommended (the exercise was conducted in safety on airfield on poor quality tarmac without ABS fitted to the bike) it was done to show that using the correct technique there is adequate grip in most circumstances when riding in the wet. Grab the front brake hard with no finesse and without ABS and you will most likely lock up and fall off. Observe, plan and brake smoothly and in plenty of time.

Braking issues

Working on an average reduction in skid resistance from dry to wet roads of 25% sounds like a recipe for paranoia about grip levels. That's probably not such a bad thing inasmuch as it should encourage caution and a greater margin for safety. That said, through practical experience on i2i Machine Control courses, application of a track derived advanced braking technique has shown that the difference in stopping performance between the wet and the dry is much smaller than most people would ever believe.

Accepting that there is an average 25% drop in grip, there is probably more grip available in the dry than many people believe anyway, as long as the correct techniques are applied so a 25% reduction in grip may sound terrifying but may still give sufficient grip if the correct technique to exploit it is applied and the rider is not making unreasonable demands of tyre grip or riding too fast.

The technique will stop the bike, if applied correctly, in a shorter distance than grabbing the brakes fully on with no subtlety and relying on the ABS to do the work. ABS will **not stop a bike in a shorter distance** than a correctly applied technique as the brakes are rapidly released and reapplied to prevent wheel lock up. ABS maintains directional stability which is very reassuring but should not be used as an excuse for riding too fast or too close. ABS was developed for aircraft in 1929 and found its way into the car industry in the 1970s and latterly onto motorcycles. **The advantage of ABS is that the unpredictability of a rider's reactions under severe or life threatening situations is removed from the equation.**

Knowing what to do and doing it can be two different things when dealing with instinctive reactions that need careful instruction and repeated practice to retrain. The advanced braking technique has to be fully explained, demonstrated and then practiced in a safe and controlled environment such as an airfield, it cannot be safely explained and learned from a written document or videos for fear of misunderstanding and should not be practiced on the highway.

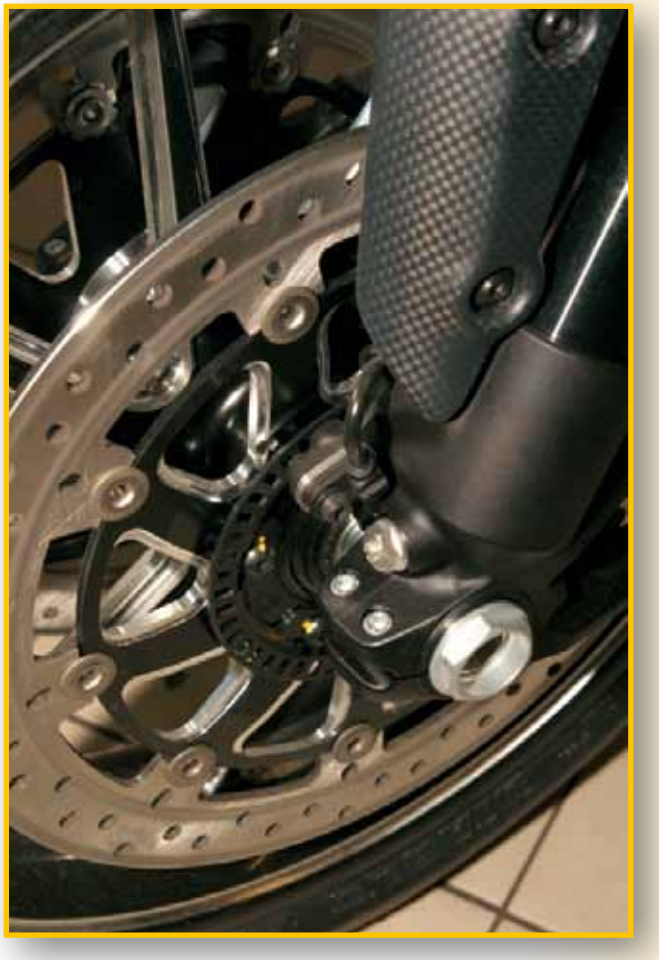
Wet Weather Riding

For those that don't wish to explore more advanced techniques under expert tuition and do not have ABS, the two most common errors that occur during wet weather braking are:

- Grabbing the front brake, causing the front wheel to lock up and break grip.
- Locking up the rear wheel through an instinctive reaction where the leg tenses, through instinct and 'muscle memory' and because the brake was being covered by the rider's foot. Because of weight transfer under braking there is very little weight pressing down on the rear of the bike so even light pressure can lock up the rear wheel once the weight transfers forwards.

Riders need to apply the front brake smoothly and progressively and be very careful with the rear. Some riders prefer to ride with the balls of the feet on the footpegs rather than their arches until they want to change gear or use the rear brake to eliminate any chance of heavy, instinctive use of the brake in an emergency. It's entirely up to the rider to make such decisions as to how they position their feet but do at least consider the effect of 'muscle memory' applying more rear brake power than you ever intended in an emergency situation. Fear and panic can introduce unpredictability into rider's reactions.

Riding defensively with a high level of observation and planning skill should allow you to brake smoothly and in plenty of time without recourse to emergency braking except in rare and completely unexpected circumstances.



A typical ABS wheel speed sensor arrangement.

Tyre issues

There are three main factors that affect a tyre's grip

- Chemical composition
- Temperature
- Inflation pressure.

The precise composition of a tyre is a trade secret but it is often composed of a mixture of natural and synthetic rubbers, fillers (carbon black, silica, carbon chalk), reinforcing materials (steel, rayon, aramid, nylon) plasticisers (oils and resins) vulcanising chemicals, chemical antioxidants and so forth.

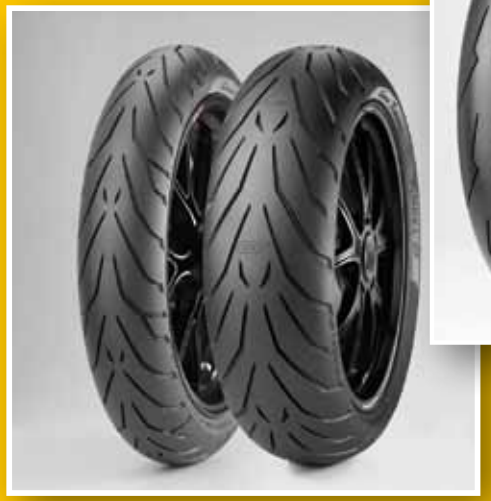
Tyre performance increases as the temperature rises, up to a certain point where they can get too hot and the performance then starts to fall off again. It is unlikely that the fall off in performance due to high temperatures will happen on a road bike tyre being used in normal circumstances, unless the tyre is being run at an incorrect inflation pressure (under-inflated).

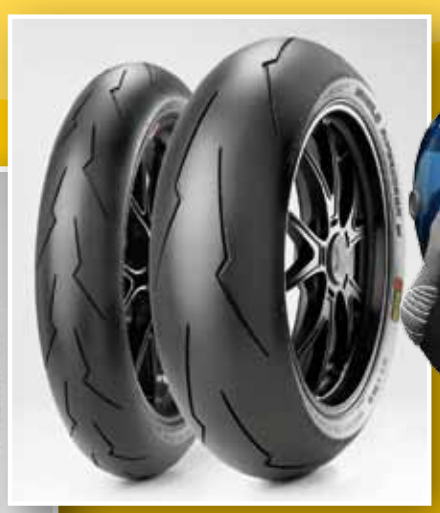
Tyres with a high silicon dioxide (silica) content tend to perform better in the wet. The profile, tread pattern and compound are chosen to match the intended use of the tyre, with softer tyres giving more grip but less wear resistance. The tread pattern will have an impact on the ability of the tyre to disperse water. Supersport tyres often have minimal tread and will disperse less water than a more general purpose or touring tyre.

The actual level of wet weather grip that you have is dependant upon

- The type of tyre and its intended design purpose.
- Correct inflation pressure
- Construction.
- Tread pattern
- Temperature
- Skid resistance of the road surface
- The demands that you are placing on the tyre at the time, eg cornering, braking or accelerating.

Pay no attention to urban myths such as reducing your tyre pressures to help the tyre heat up more quickly. Stick with the manufacturers recommended pressures, they know what they are talking about and don't arrive at recommended pressures by randomly guessing. You need the tyre to keep its shape so it keeps the tread grooves open to displace water and not close them up by running a lower pressure.





Positioning

An earlier point about the levels of grip in the wheel tracks brings us to the general issue of positioning.

Remember the four priorities when deciding on positioning your bike for cornering as listed in the **cornering download** and taken from Motorcycle Roadcraft, the police rider's handbook.

1. Safety
2. Stability
3. Information needs (Getting a better view)
4. Reducing the tightness of the bend

The list is in descending order of priority, safety and stability being more important than getting a better view into the bend, all that matters is that you negotiate the bend safely regardless whether or not it is the same line that you would normally follow in the dry.

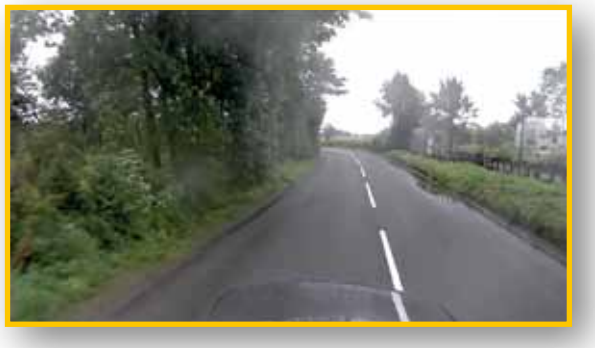
For example that wet metal inspection cover near to the crown of the road on a bend was there to be seen early enough for you to plan a route avoiding it, your position was probably dominated by information needs, a desire to see further into the bend so safety and stability were compromised in the process.

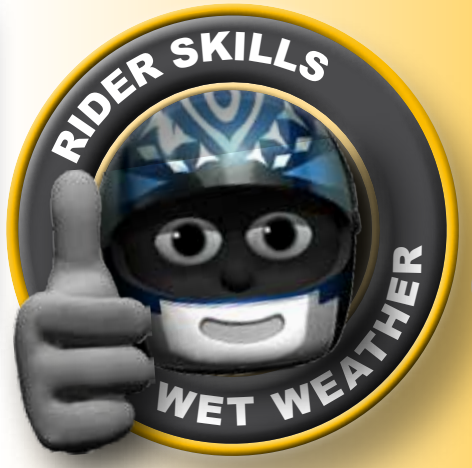
Another example might be the rider that disregards the surface conditions and chooses the outer smooth track on the approach to a left hand bend. The rider will have to be very careful in applying the throttle to avoid tyre grip trade off issues. A rider on the more grippy line may well be able to apply the power with more security to stabilise the bike through the turn.

If the road surface is not badly worn and has a similar level of grip across it, the advantages obtained by following the lines you would normally do in the dry (see cornering download) should not compromise safety or stability, allowing for points 3 and 4 in the list to be exploited.

Safety is always paramount and ultimately whatever line you take it's your judgement call. As with any bend, the circumstances change on a daily basis and in the wet the variations in surface conditions require good concentration, riding according to what can be seen, always bearing in mind the safe riding rule;

Always be able to stop on your own side of the road in the distance you can see to be clear.





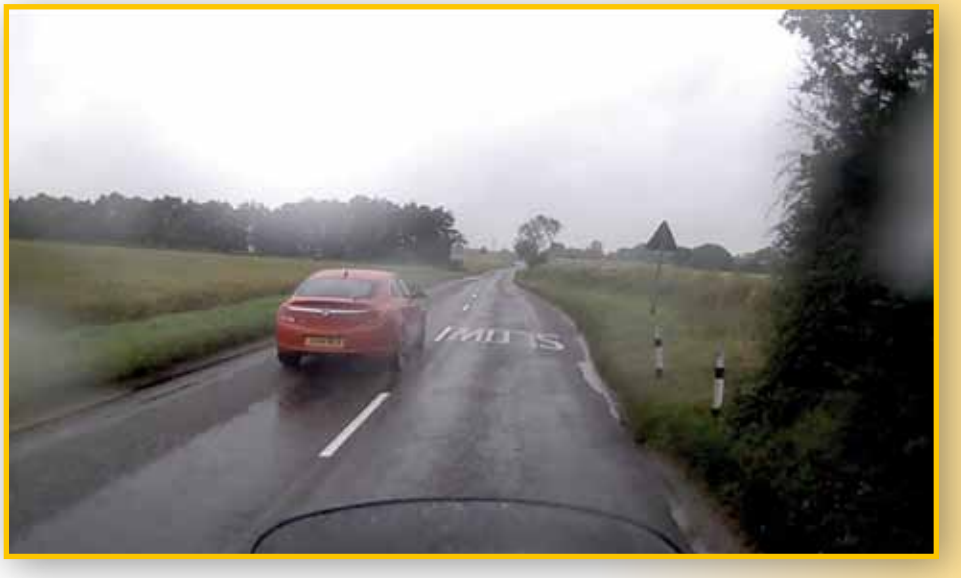
Confident safe overtaking

The techniques that are applied in the dry, and outlined in the overtaking download, are just as applicable in the wet. What becomes very clear is how valuable the three stage technique is in the wet where you have to take up a following position first.

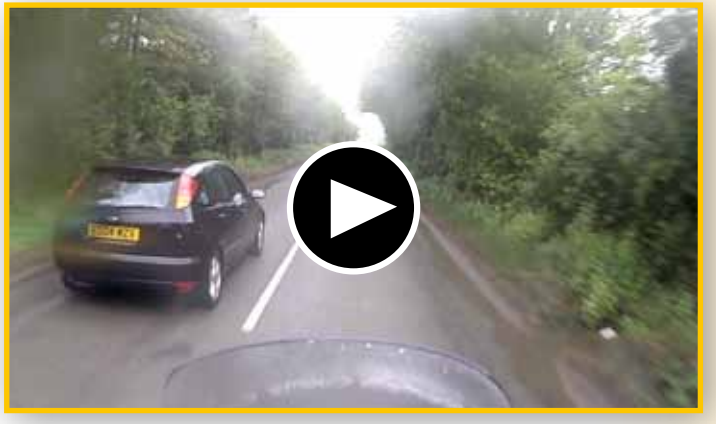
You may have to allow a greater distance to counter the effects of spray from the vehicle in front or maintain a greater stopping distance for safety. The actual mechanism of the overtake will remain the same with the sideways movement without power applied being particularly valuable prior to accelerating. Advantages include:

- The rider is able confirm that the overtake is still possible and safe. If it is not, the rider can return to the nearside without having to lose speed first.
- The rider will get a better view past the vehicle to be overtaken and can check whether there is a nearside hazard such as a large puddle that may cause the vehicle to move to the right and into conflict if the rider continues with the overtake.
- The rider will be clear of most of the spray thrown up by the vehicle in front.
- If the road surface has smooth polished wheel tracks, the bike can cross them without power being applied and positioned on the higher skid resistant surface in the centre of the lane giving optimum grip once power is applied.
- The bike will be pointing in the direction it needs to be travelling when the power is applied rather than diagonally if the power is applied from behind the vehicle.

Keep it smooth – sorry, we couldn't resist mentioning it again!



Bike upright, on a grippy line, good visibility ahead to make sure there is nothing to cause the car to swerve out during the overtake.



Off Road Skills Rock!

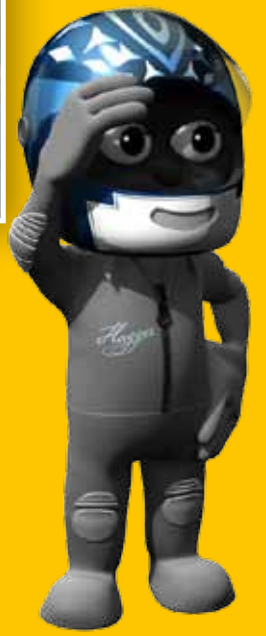
Most racers will tell you that their track skills are enhanced by off road riding skills. Off road, the bike moves about but can be controlled; it does not have to be a prelude to disaster. Positive words of advice will not convince you of this it needs to be learned in a controlled environment. Like so many new skills, it looks scary to the untrained eye but under the guidance of an expert tutor, and done in small stages, things that people consider to beyond their capabilities suddenly become easily achievable.

If you get the chance to do an off road training course, do so. Not only will you find it tremendous fun but your appreciation of the handling of the bike will be transformed. If this is followed up by training on a Supermoto, you will really understand what bikes are capable of and how much inside the capabilities of the bike you normally (and should) ride.

This should then encourage you to relax on challenging road surfaces and enjoy the ride more.

On an off road course you will learn how your seating position on the bike enhances control and that even if the bike starts to slide, it is not the end of the world as long as you don't panic and fight it, the bike will mostly fix its own problems if you allow it to do so. Once you realise that a bike sliding is part of off road riding and controllable, it ceases to be a problem should your road bike twitch or step out of line. Panic is your worst enemy.

Warning: Off road riding is completely addictive – we accept no responsibility for domestic strife that may follow.



Wet Weather Riding

Summary

There is nothing mystical or magical about riding with confidence in the wet. It relies on sound techniques, a smooth riding style, good observation and planning skills, practice and riding according to the conditions.

Being told to relax when riding in the wet is unlikely to convince apprehensive riders that all will be well.

The advice contained in this download, although basic, should assist you in working towards becoming smoother and more thoughtful when approaching wet weather riding but as it is primarily a practical skill, it is one that you will have to work towards in stages. Quality training will greatly assist in moving this process along but we always advise getting a copy of 'Motorcycle Roadcraft' for a more detailed analysis of rider skills.

You will be fortunate to book up a road based training session where you want to practice riding in the wet and actually find it to be wet on the day but an off road experience day with a competent trainer will undoubtedly help with both confidence and an understanding of motorcycle dynamics regardless of the weather. It may very well be the best day you have ever had on a motorcycle.

Contact roadsafety@norfolk.gov.uk (01603 638115) to discuss training options including the Police Safe Rider course, Hugger's Challenge and the amazing i2i Machine Control courses plus details of where you can go for off-road training.