

RIDER SKILLS

READING THE ROAD

BROUGHT TO YOU BY: PRORIDER

Words: **Karel Pavich**

Being able to anticipate damaged road surfaces and hazards is an integral part of safe riding.

Keep a look out for road signs – they are valuable assets when riding, however many hazards are not signposted. It's easy to become fixated by road hazards – but always keep your eyes and head up and look where you want to go. Here are some of the hazards you will face this summer:

ROAD WORKS

These seem to pop up everywhere on our roads in the summer.

- Maintain a generous following distance to avoid dust and flying stones
- If there are wheel tracks, ride in these as the surface will be firmer
- Select a lower gear so you 'drive' through the road works
- Avoid using brakes if possible, but if unavoidable, use gentle front brake

as long as you are upright or gentle rear brake without locking it

OIL AND DIESEL

You can usually see the colour of oil or diesel on the road, especially if it's wet. Avoid riding through it if possible, but if you can't avoid it:

- Ride through as straight and upright as possible, the least amount of lean angle gives you more grip on your tyres
- Avoid braking at all while on this surface

SLIPPERY SURFACES

These can be:

- Melted tar
- Road paint (when wet)
- Puddles, potholes or manhole covers
- Road grit
- Cattle excrement (from those infamous cattle trucks that are still allowed to spread it on the highways)
- Shiny tarmac or concrete

For these hazards you will need to:

- Ride through as upright and as straight as possible
- Avoid braking at all while on these surfaces
- Slow down beforehand if possible
- Keep looking where you want to go

If you come across a hazard mid corner, you may need to 'stand the bike up' and then lean it over again once you are past the hazard. Ensure you can do this safely without crossing the centre line or running off the road.

RECRUIT ALL OF YOUR SENSES

You need to recruit all your senses to be able to anticipate road hazards when riding, you should be able to instantly determine if any road surface is sealed or graveled, dry, wet or icy, or has patches of oil, diesel or grit.

Tune into your environment and read the road ahead of you.

BRM