

# RIDER SKILLS

# SAFE RIDING AT NIGHT

BROUGHT TO YOU BY: PRORIDER

Words: Karel Pavich

**W**hen riding at night it is often harder to see, and to be seen. Ride safely and make night riding enjoyable, rather than something you have to endure or not do at all through fear or lack of confidence.

## LIGHTS

You can only see what your headlights can illuminate so your speed needs to be such that you are able to stop within the distance that you can see. Over-riding your headlights can lead you into a hazard you won't see until you're on top of it. Check your lights are adequate for the way you ride at night, it's easy to upgrade existing bulbs with brighter replacements or higher wattage bulbs.

## BEING SEEN

You might be able to see a lot of stuff – but can people see YOU? Other road users (including pedestrians) may be stressed, tired, intoxicated or texting, and not looking out for you.

- Pick your place on the road, riding too close to the kerb means you blend in with the street lighting and riding too close to the centre line is where it's the most dirty and slippery.

- Make sure any luggage you are carrying doesn't obscure your rear lights.

- Reflective tape comes in lots of colours which can be matched closely to your bike, so it's inconspicuous in daylight but works well at night.

- Put reflectors on your clothing as well as your bike and helmet. Prismatic reflectors are more effective than glass beaded ones.

## BE PROACTIVE ABOUT YOUR SAFETY

Tinted visors significantly reduce your ability to see at night so keep a clear visor with you for night riding.

- Possums and other nocturnal animals can bolt out in front of you with little or no warning.

- Be aware that distances are harder to judge at night, for everyone else as well as for you.

- Let tailgaters pass and keep enough space between you and vehicles behind and in front.

- Observe the taillights of vehicles you are following. Bouncing taillights indicate bumps or a rough road surface.

- Carry an extra layer of clothing - if you get cold your attention will wander.

- Be aware that road surfaces can be really tricky to see at night, so keep your speed at a level where you can read the road ahead.

- Don't ride tired or distracted, if it's been a long day, pull over and take a break.

- Splattering bugs attracted to your headlight can compromise your vision and your ability to see upcoming hazards. Keep a micro-fibre cloth and spray with you so you can keep your headlight and visor clear.