

RIDER SKILLS
DODGING DEBRIS
BROUGHT TO YOU BY: PRORIDER

Words: Karel Pavich Photo: Supplied by Ministry of Civil Defense

There's a multitude of road debris and surface hazards that you can encounter at any given time on a motorcycle.

Trucks can drop anything they are carrying, from slippery fish to sharp scrap metal and anything in between. Reducing speed, keeping the bike upright and steering straight through these hazards will minimise your risk of coming off the bike. Identifying what is further up the road beyond the hazard (if you can see that far) may prevent you from crashing into or riding through it.

If in doubt – Slow right down or STOP.

Burst drains and water pipes can create a build up of water and other 'nasties'. Sewerage, mud, and wet leaves can create very real hazards. Where there is a lot of surface water

don't assume what the road surface is like beneath it.

Wet leaves can send a bike spinning out of control. Sewage and mud can turn the road into a skating rink. Avoid braking if possible, brake gently if you have to, and use engine braking where appropriate.

Road works can leave behind loose gravel, metal chips and mud. Take extra care when cornering where loose gravel is present. Take notice of road signs. Reduce your speed when approaching road works, and continue to be vigilant after they have officially finished. There could still be hazards on the road for some distance – particularly when there has been rain.

Landslips are common on Kiwi roads, so is road-kill,

so take extra care when passing a slip or a dead animal, especially if doing so involves crossing the centre line. In built-up areas, children, cats, dogs and other animals can bolt into the road with no warning. Observe speed limits and be prepared to stop quickly. Be familiar with the hazards each environment poses.

Ice is also your enemy – particularly black ice, which is often impossible to see. Sometimes you won't know it's there until you're on it. Assume all ice is black and ride as if it was. When riding on ice or snow, avoid braking if at all possible. Stay upright, don't lean, and think 'gently does it'.

Everything you do has to be done gently. Smooth is the rule. Reduce your speed safely through your gears. Keep a good distance behind vehicles you are following. Riding with your legs out to the side is not elegant, but neither is being pinned under a skidded crashed bike.

Rough, uneven road surfaces can be challenging even for experienced riders. Rocks, tree roots, potholes and temporary asphalt repairs can all throw you off balance. Therefore, always ride at a speed that matches your sight distance.

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