

A Minute For Safety

Those of us in the Southwest and Western US still have plenty of riding time left this season and for a while longer it will still be fairly hot. Heat is the enemy of our motorcycles and will be a detriment to their performance. Our bikes fight heat by various cooling systems: oil circulates throughout the engine; air moves over engine parts, particularly those with cooling fins; liquid cooling is carried through the engine and cooled down through a radiator. For optimum performance it is important to keep oil levels topped off, coolant levels topped off and engine and radiator parts clean so air can move freely.

There is another component to our riding system that relies on proper fluid levels and cooling and that is ourselves. Our bodies are precision machines and to operate properly we need to take care of them on rides in hot weather as much as we do our motorcycles.

Keep our fluids topped off the same as oil levels. Drink plenty of the proper fluids (water & electrolyte drinks, fruit juices) before you get thirsty. Avoid caffeinated and alcoholic drinks.

Use a supplemental cooling system which includes loose fitting light colored clothing; a mesh jacket that provides protection from the sun but allows air to pass over your skin is better than bare skin. To add liquid cooling, pour water over your shirt or consider adding a hydration vest that can be soaked, and wear either under mesh riding jacket for your own personal swamp cooler

Other considerations:

Take plenty of breaks to hydrate and cool yourself off as well as checking on your riding partners.

Know the symptoms of heat emergencies:

Heat Exhaustion

- Confusion and/or dizziness
- Fatigue
- Headaches
- Muscle or abdominal cramps
- Pale skin & profuse sweating
- Rapid heartbeat

Treatment – drink water; remove tight or unnecessary clothing, apply cooling measures such as ice, wet towels, take a cool shower

Heat Stroke

- Body temperature above 103
- Rapid pulse
- Reduced sweating
- Disorientation
- Warm, red, dry skin

Treatment – This is a medical emergency! Call 911! Lower the persons body temperature by spraying with water, apply cold wet towels or ice packs to armpits/neck/groin, do not give fluids if the person is unconscious or vomiting.

Take care of yourself and your motorcycle as you travel, so neither breaks down on the road while riding.

Ride with Pride and safety

Jim Jackson

Safety Officer

Southwest Conference

Blue Knights International LEMC