

Lake Charles Harley Owner Group
Chapter #1686

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Dealership Website: www.hdoflc.com Dealership Phone: 337-436-0022 Facebook: Harley Davidson of Lake Charles

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March Newsletter



Sponsoring Dealership

Harley Davidson of Lake Charles
Nina and Bill Doherty
337-436-0022

Website: www.hdoflc.com
Facebook: Harley Davidson of Lake Charles

General Membership Meetings

1st Saturday of the Month at 10 a.m.
Clubhouse is located 2120 Broad Street, Lake Charles, LA next to Dealership

Next Meeting: April 1, 2017

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As we hope to emerge soon from the Polar Vortex, it's nearing the time to put your bike back on the road. But, when you do, that first ride of the year can be one of the most dangerous. This is what to watch out for on your first spring motorcycle ride.

Sand/Gravel/Salt

Over the winter, the roads will have been covered in traction-aiding substances like these. They tend to stick around for the first few weeks after the snow melts and gather in corners and intersections. We all know what the consequences of hitting this stuff in a corner or while braking is, so keep any eye out for it.

Potholes

These are formed as water expands and contracts with freezing; they're created over the winter. There'll be more of these in the spring than there were last fall. Small ones aren't a huge concern so long as you don't hit one while cornering or braking, but in the Northeast, potholes can get big enough to swallow a Bentley, let alone your bike.

Subsidence

With heavy rains and snowmelt, erosion can occur, undermining the footing of roads, especially in the mountains and out in the boonies where there's little road maintenance. Pay special attention to the edges of the asphalt and the verges, where previously firm ground can crumble away.

Animals

Spring means babies and animals migrating in search of food. Pay particular attention near bodies of water during dawn and dusk hours. You wouldn't want to kill a duckling, would you?

Flowing Water

Snowmelt or busted water pipes can create streams of water running across roads in unexpected places. Even if water is not currently present, its previous flow could have swept sand and other debris across the road.

Cold Temperatures

You're eager to start riding again, we get that, but doing so in just-above-freezing temps requires a little extra caution. Even if all other hazards are nonexistent, your sportbike tires aren't designed to work at temps below about 50 degrees and you'll need to account for the cold's effect on your body and dress accordingly.

Other Riders

It's not just you who's skills are rusty. Other riders are already a major hazard on the best of days, but on their first ride back in the spring? Watch out, particularly on popular riding roads.

What You Can Do About It

In town and on the highway, leave extra following distance behind other vehicles; they can obscure potholes, gravel and other hazards until it's too late.

Ride with extra caution, leaving more room than usual to slow down, change line or avoid hazards. Your skills will be rusty too, so leave some extra speed in your pocket to account for that too.

Heading to your favorite riding road for the first time in a while? Run a reconnaissance lap looking for hazards before you try and take it at your normal pace.

Even if the day starts warm, the sun still sets early. Make sure you pack a clear visor and stuff a silk balaclava and glove liners under your seat in case temperatures drop unexpectedly.

Motorcycle Windshield Care & Cleaning

Motorcycle windshields require a bit more care than car windshields. It isn't simply a matter of splashing water on and wiping it with a paper towel at the gas station. **By Art Friedman.**

The plastic used to make motorcycle windshields is not as scratch-resistant as the glass windshield on your car, and as a result you can not treat it the same way. If you let it get scratched it will soon become hazy, especially when riding into the sun or oncoming headlights.

If you want to make your motorcycle's windshield sparkle, don't use paper (since it will only scratch the plastic) and don't use those gas station squeegees. Apply warm water and a mild dishwashing liquid with a soft cloth to soak your shield before wiping, and avoid glass-cleansing agents such as Windex, or petroleum-based chemicals such as Rain-X and Armor All -- the solvent action of the alcohol in these products can be harmful to some shields. To remove scratches, break out yet another soft clean cloth together with a fine grade buffing compound; hand buffing is recommended for most screens.

To help prevent bugs from sticking to your windshield, use a polish containing wax (but consult the shield manufacturer's recommendations before applying anything).

If you simply try to remove a bug that's stuck to your windshield, it will smear if wet or may scratch if it has dried and hardened.

The best way to relocate your insect collection off your windshield is to lay a clean, very wet towel with plenty of nap on the bug-splattered side of the windshield for a couple of minutes. Let the water soak and soften up the offending insect carcasses. Once the water has softened them up, the bugs and their juices can be wiped away easily, using the same wet towel, without scratching the plastic. Be sure you don't use any kind of paper towel, as it will cut into plastic. Follow up your wet wipe with an application of your favorite cleaner-polish. We're partial to Pledge because it's inexpensive, fills small scratches and its basic solvent does a good job of unsticking bug entrails.

When not in use, most windshields can be protected by sliding an old cotton T-shirt over them.

Motorcycle Tires: The Sticky Facts & Top Tips

The only things keeping you from a really bad day when you are riding are your motorcycle's tires and the air in them. Here is what you should know past the round-and-black points. From the October 2001 issue of Motorcycle Cruiser magazine.

September 7, 2011

Most riders realize their bike's sole connection to the unforgiving asphalt is a thin, pliable hoop of rubber encircling the wheel. What many bikers don't realize though, is how crucial their motorcycle's relationship with this rubber really is. "Co-dependent" would not be an understatement here.

Essential as these rubber hoops are, plenty of riders still can't offer up much insight into their tires' construction or duties. And as any tire company rep will readily admit, many riders buy tires based primarily on appearance rather than performance. But even though rubber has very much become a styling element of cruisers, a tire's beauty is deeper than its tread pattern--and what you don't know can hurt you.

Nice Carcass: The backbone of a tire is called the carcass. This interior layer consists of overlapping synthetic cords called plies. The angle of these plies will largely determine a tire's strength and flexibility in action, while the entire carcass construction will affect a tire's performance and wear. Bias-ply tires, which most cruisers wear, have plies running diagonally from one bead to the other, with alternating plies angled in opposite directions. If you could see through the plies...well, you'd be Superman, but you'd also notice that the cords form an X.

Do We Have Contact?: When a tire rolls, the part that hits the pavement flattens out, becoming the contact patch. As forward motion continues, the contact patch travels away from the pavement and returns to its rounded shape. This constant flexing from round to flat causes plies to rub against each other, generating heat. Unfortunately, not many cruisers are built to use radials, which heat up less and wear better, but improvements in bias-ply technology have produced bias tires which are as good as radials for cruising.

Don't Tread on Me: The tire section motorcyclists are most familiar with is the tread--it's the outermost region of the tire pressing against the road. Molded from tough rubber, the surface of the tread is crisscrossed with grooves called sipes, which channel water away from the contact patch to prevent hydroplaning. The entire tread affects cooling, wear and stability, and the big daddy of them all--traction.

Get a Bead On: The bead is the inner diameter edge of the tire, comprised of high tensile steel wires. It's the edge of the sidewall where the tire seats against the rim, providing an airtight fit, and it acts as an anchor to the plies.

Up the Wall: The tire's sidewall is the portion of the tire between the bead and the tread. It's flexible enough to soak up bumps, yet stiff enough to limit rollover and protect the side of the tire from road damage. It's also the place cruiser tires showcase styling conceits such as whitewalls and fat lettered model names.

Another important consideration to remember is that bikes with spoked wheels almost always use tube-type tires to keep air from leaking out around the spoke nipples, while bikes with solid or cast wheels are usually shod with tubeless tires. In tubeless applications the inside of the tire is sealed, as is the rim.

TOP 10 TIRE TIPS

Now that you understand the language of rubber, it doesn't mean you shouldn't keep practicing. A neglected tire can be a deadly one.

1. Air It Out: Check tire pressure every chance you get. There's probably no simpler procedure that's more important and more ignored by bikers of every stripe. The air, not the carcass, supports the bike, and underinflation is a tire's number one enemy. (Make sure the tires are cool when you take the reading.) For a better traction in wet conditions, increase pressures by about 10 percent. Unsure of what the pressure is supposed to be? Look for a sticker somewhere on the bike. It is also probably on the VIN (serial number) plate near the steering head with the gross vehicle weight rating (GVWR) and gross axle weight ratings (GAWR) information.

2. Step in Line: Pay close attention to alignment--shaft drive bikes have no adjustment, but if you have a chain or belt, check the position of your tires. Proper alignment ensures better handling and longer wear.

3. Steady, Now: Although it primarily affects handling, improper balance can also shorten a tire's life. Check it after 500 or 1000 miles of use.

4. Top It Off: The valve stem cap should be securely fastened on the stem, because it's an important part of your tire's sealing system. It'll give you extra security at high speeds, when centrifugal force can conspire to open the valve inside the stem.

5. Soap It Up: Most tire manufacturers recommend that the only substance used to keep rubber shiny should be good old soap and water. Many alleged protectants actually promote premature cracking and finish deterioration. Make sure you wipe off any lube, brake fluid or gas promptly, too.

6. Look Before You Crank: Before you saddle up, take a moment to visually inspect your tires. We can't tell you how many times we've pulled out screws or nails before a ride, thus preventing almost certain tire failure. Once you're on the road, it'll be too late. **7. Stay Smooth:** This is common sense--avoid potholes and sharp objects on the road that can compromise your tire's integrity. The same goes for curbs.

8. Don't Mix and Match: Never run two tires of differing construction. We can't stress this enough, and this rule applies to bias-ply vs. radials as well as tubeless and tube-type tires--even bias-ply vs. bias-belted tires. The results can be disastrous.

9. Scuff 'Em Up: Optimal grip is obtained only after the tread surface has been ridden on, so go into those first few twisties with a bit of caution. The suggested break-in distance is usually 100 or so miles. After that, check the tire's pressure again!

10. Don't Scrimp: If you replace your tires, make sure you replace the tubes, too. Some manufacturers even recommend that you change both tires at the same time, even if they wear differently.

Still have sticky questions? Tire manufacturers invite unsolicited phone calls (we know, because we call them all the time). They'll talk you through any confusion and help you figure out what works best for your bike and riding style.



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