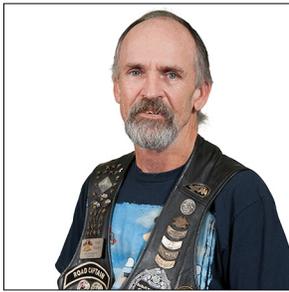


# Riding In Windy Conditions



**By Mark Manley**  
Safety Officer

Wow! How time flies, it's hard to believe that March is upon us and I'm sure you know what that means, wind!

I have been researching riding safely in windy conditions especially gusting winds and I hope this article will help you out.

Strong winds can create problems for a biker. A constant 25-mph cross wind can make for less than fun riding, and gusty wind is the worst. In a cross wind M.S.F. suggests keeping your motorcycle on the side of the lane the wind is coming from and lean into it as necessary. This is in case a big blast moves you over a bit and it doesn't move you into either on-coming traffic or off the road or a vehicle on your right or left that may be next to you pending what type of road you're on. Expect it and be ready to react but don't over react. A couple of examples and sometimes an attention getter riding down here on the coast (Hwy 98). As I'm riding past condos and hotels they block the wind, well when you hit the gap between condos that wind is accelerating though that gap and you go from calm to (HELLO!) a blast that will rock you pretty good on a windy day. Riding on back roads the trees will block a lot of it until you hit a clearing and then.... you get it. The other example is interstate riding there's really nothing to help block the wind.



Wind wobble, wind makes the bike wobble, but even normal riding has a wobble. The rider just naturally compensates for it. In windy conditions, it's the same, the wobble is just bigger. the more stable you are riding, the better you handle the wind. The principle is the same as a rodeo rider uses riding a bucking bronco. Relax, don't grip too tightly, and counter-balance the bikes movement. You continually re-adjust to the center. Do not over-react to windiness, as wobble when riding is perfectly normal.

For those that have fairings with windscreens or just have windscreens the pros; good for head winds the cons; they can act as big sails in a cross wind thus putting added stress and strain on the rider. From my own experience if you don't have either, I was leading H.D. factory demo rides and it was windy that day and the only bike left was a soft tail that didn't have a windscreen and my neck was killing me, I wanted to park it on the side of the

road right there and I was only a few miles into the demo. Needless to say the next ride I took out I went on my bike.

Some things you can do to help you ride safer is lean into the direction the wind is coming from, counter steering is also effective, slowing down, and make your profile as low as possible in high wind. This is done by leaning forward over the tank and lightly gripping the tank with your knees (if possible). Lastly before you head out make sure your tires are at their proper inflation.

Group riding in windy conditions you may want to increase your space cushion from the normal 2 seconds off the bike in front of you and 1 second off the stagger to 3-4 and 2-3. Conditions

normally dictate your space cushion and the road captains will advise the group during the pre-ride brief.

Enjoy the journey, it's a trip!

Mark