



## CYCLING FACT SHEET No. 39

# Wet weather riding has its benefits

Unless it is stormy or blowing a gale, riding in the rain presents few concerns for the regular cyclist and in fact, could have some surprising benefits if you are a bicycle commuter.

When the weather looks wet, many workers and university students shun public transport in favour of their cars. This creates more traffic congestion on the journey and less parking at the destination – neither of which are a problem for those travelling by bike.

With the winter months approaching, the key to hassle-free riding during this period is a little additional preparation. For bikes using standard rim brakes, check that there is plenty of rubber left on the blocks and that the levers do not touch the handlebars when squeezed hard. Due to the lower ambient light levels, anything you can do to increase visibility such as wearing light-coloured clothing or a reflective vest is a good idea.

A plastic poncho or rain jacket and pants will protect your clothes while still allowing freedom of movement. Jackets made from waterproof fabrics that “breathe” such as Gortex are an excellent investment.

A helmet visor and water resistant shoes can be worthwhile, and you can buy tool tubs that will keep your mobile phone and other valuables dry. These screw-top containers are designed to slip snugly into a spare water bottle cage.

Fitting some cheap mudguards will prevent water splashing up but make sure that the back one has a white or silver colour on the outer surface that faces the rear. Dark-coloured back guards contravene road traffic regulations for bicycles.



Another tip is to under-inflate your tyres slightly as this provides more traction. Just remember to pump them up when the fine weather returns.

Wet roads and paths require a different riding technique because of the longer stopping distances for your bike and all other vehicles on the road. Slow down and avoid riding over areas of that are potentially slippery, particularly when braking or turning. These include metal grates and manhole covers, painted markings on the road or path surface, and wet leaves.

Oil patches that accumulate in the middle of traffic lanes at intersections and in car parking bays are notoriously slippery. It is also unwise to ride straight through muddy puddles or potholes because you cannot tell how deep they are and may risk rim damage.

On shared paths, be aware of the amount of water being thrown out by your tyres when passing pedestrians. After a ride in the rain, you can dry your shoes by placing rolled up newspaper inside to soak up moisture. Prevent rust by wiping the bike down thoroughly and applying water repellent spray on the gear housing, cables and brakes, then wax the frame before putting it away.

***This fact sheet is one of a series dealing with the use of bicycles for recreation and transport in Western Australia. The series looks at a range of cycling-related topics including ride routes, touring tips, maintenance, safety, road rules, insurance and product reviews. You can find more cycling fact sheets online at [www.transport.wa.gov.au/cycling](http://www.transport.wa.gov.au/cycling)***

Cycling Unit  
Department of Transport  
441 Murray Street, Perth WA 6000  
Tel: (08) 9216 8000  
Fax: (08) 9216 8497  
Email: [cycling@transport.wa.gov.au](mailto:cycling@transport.wa.gov.au)