

Ask the expert

Got a problem? MCN's Chris Dabbs and our team of experts have the answers

THE EXPERTS

Andrew Campbell

Solicitor and author of the MCN Law column for the last five years



Chris Dabbs

MCN's agony uncle and former road tester with 30 years' experience in the world of bikes



Gareth Evans

Ex-British Superbike suspension engineer and boss of Reactive Suspension near York



Stuart Gaines

Service manager at dealer Webbs of Peterborough with 11 years' experience on all styles of bike



Sean Hayes

Instructor with Circuit Based Training, riding for 25 years, co-author of instruction book *Past The Bike Test*



Bryn Phillips

Works in product support for Cambrian Tyres, the UK's largest motorcycle tyre supplier to the motorcycle trade



Keith Roissetter

Accessories manager at Infinity Motorcycles who boasts an encyclopaedic knowledge of what works, and what doesn't



Sergeant Paul Mostyn

Is a serving police motorcyclist with the Met and a BikeSafe instructor



ASK YOUR QUESTION

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Pogo-prone rear end on your Kawasaki will be down to a lack of rebound damping

Fix my bobbing ZX-6R

My 2001 Kawasaki ZX-6R never feels as sharp and precise as I want it to be. When going through fast, slight bends while on the power and leant over just a little, the back end will start bobbing, as if someone's jumping up and down on the back of the bike. The bike is still close to the standard settings. I've tried stiffening the preload and compression damping, but get the same issue.

Srmccrea91, MCN forums

Leave the compression alone and adjust the rebound damping on the rear shock instead. What's happening as you accelerate is that the rear end is squatting down as the spring is compressing. But then there isn't enough rebound damping to slow the spring down as it recovers, which is giving you that pogoing sensation.

Gareth Evans, Reactive Suspension

TT trip tyres please

I am changing the tyres on my KTM 990SM before I go to the TT and I am also planning a short trip to France. I don't do high miles, but like lots of grip.

Tim Lees, email

The 990SM has such well sorted suspension that it makes the best use of any tyre, making sport-touring tyres feel like sports tyres. But I get the feeling that, even with this knowledge, you'd be happier on sports tyres because you have expectations that sports tyres will out-grip sport-touring tyres even though there's very little difference on the road.

So with that in mind, the best of the current crop (bearing in mind you also want a short Euro jaunt from them) would be Bridgestone's S20 tyres. These give massive grip in the dry and are excellent in the wet, but they don't have the longest durability of the sports tyre bunch.

Of the others out there, Continental SportAttack 2 are more durable than the S20 while still giving more than

HOW TO... ADJUST YOUR BIKE'S CHAIN

1 Check the tension

With the bike on the sidestand, grasp the lower run of the chain halfway between front and rear sprockets, and move the chain up and down. Check your owners' manual for the right amount of free play. If your chain has more (or possibly less) than this figure the chain needs adjusting.

2 And check it once more

Place the bike on the centrestand or a paddock stand and recheck chain tension, as it may differ now the bike's weight is off the suspension. Take this difference into account when adjusting the chain. If you adjust the chain to its proper tension on the centrestand, it may become too tight when off the centrestand.

3 Undo the back wheel

Loosen the axle nut. Adjust the chain by adjusting the bolts on the end of the swingarm, one on either side of the wheel. Usually there will be two heads on each bolt – an inner nut to move the axle and an outer nut to lock the other in place afterwards. Loosen the outer nut and adjust the inner nut, going a quarter-turn at a time. Move the nut on the other side of the wheel by an equal amount.

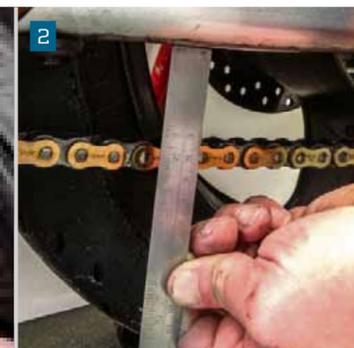
4 And tighten it all up again

When you have the right tension, tighten the outside nuts and axle nut. Check the tension again as tightening the axle nut can tighten the chain. If your adjusters are different to those here, see your owner's manual for the procedure.

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enough performance for the odd track day. Michelin Pilot Power 3s are new and offer performance that's up there with the other two, but it's too early to talk about durability. Pirelli Diablo Rosso 2s are an all-round sports tyre like the Conti, but a little older in design and not quite as accomplished. I'm reluctant to recommend Dunlop Sportsmarts because, although they're a great tyre on most bikes, they are very pressure-sensitive on this KTM. They can feel like they're tipping in abruptly if the front tyre pressure isn't spot-on.

Another good reason to regularly check your tyre pressures.

Bryn Phillips, Cambrian Tyres

Skippy the bush FZR

I have a 1989 Yamaha FZR600 3HE with a throttle response problem. When the bike is in neutral and I rev it to 2000rpm it surges to 3000rpm by itself. When I'm riding in this rev range it acts like it's on 'kangaroo' fuel. I've been told to clean and balance the carbs and fit a fuel filter but it's made no odds.

Kirkyboy95, MCN forums



Poor running FZR? Check for cracked inlet rubbers

The 3HE FZR600s are well known for carburation problems – and if they aren't sorted any carb balancing you do will probably make it worse because you are setting it to an incorrect vacuum.

An easy first check is whether the inlet rubbers are cracked, allowing air to leak into the inlet tracts and leaning out the mixture. Get the bike warmed up and running on tickover, then get a can of EasyStart and spray a little around each carb intake rubber and air filter junction in turn – don't use too much or you could risk a fire. If the revs rise on any particular cylinder that'll tell you that EasyStart is being sucked in through a leak and you know you will need to replace the rubbers.

Once it's got more than 10,000 miles on the clock this model is also known for wear to the orifice that the needle jet moves in as part of the emulsion tube assembly. It goes egg-shaped and allows too much fuel to rise up into the bore of the carb and pretty much drown out the engine's power and cause sloppy rich, soggy running.

I source replacement jet kits from factorypro.com in California, even with shipping and some tax they are worth it because they are nickel-plated and the higher-spec kits are titanium so throttle response is quicker, and because they are so light they don't wear



Held's Air 'n' Dry gloves have ventilation and Gore-Tex

the brass emulsion tube – preventing future problems.

Stuart Gaines, Webbs of Peterborough

Sweat-free summer gloves

I'm in the market for a waterproof glove for summer use. What's out there that will fend off summer thunderstorms, but isn't so insulated that my hands will end up wetter through sweating?

Mark Fox, email

Unlike many jackets and trousers, no-one has yet invented gloves with a removable warmth liner. The closest thing to a year-round glove is recent 'twin chamber' designs which offer two compartments. Most of the gloves on the market of this design offer 'warm' and 'warmer' chambers in

an attempt to provide the wearer with a summer/winter waterproof glove.

The best I have come across are Held Air 'n' Dry gloves with a ventilated chamber for those (all too rare) warm and dry days and a thin Gore-Tex-lined chamber for when the heavens open. Don't buy them for year-long use though, when the mercury drops into single digits put them back in the drawer and reach for some dedicated winter mitts. They're expensive at £144.95, but the longevity and quality of Held gloves makes them well worth their high price.

Alternatively, well-known brands such as Rukka, Dainese and Hein Gericke have models which offer Gore-Tex 'X-trafit' construction. This is a simple phrase for a complex construction process which means the gloves are totally waterproof, but relatively thin for maximum feel. Not perfect for colder weather, but one of the best options for taking just one pair of gloves out for a ride.

Whoever came up with the phrase 'fits like a glove' clearly never used them on a motorcycle. Go to your dealer and try some on before you buy, and don't forget to try them in situ on your bike. What feels great in a showroom may take on another feel altogether when gripping some bars and reaching for levers.

Keith Roissetter, Infinity London

MCN LAW YOUR LEGAL QUESTIONS

Pedestrian crossing should have stayed where he was

I was riding my Suzuki GSX650 to work when the traffic came to a standstill up ahead. There was nothing coming the other way towards me so I filtered past the queue at about 20mph. Suddenly this guy ran into the road, colliding with me and knocking me off. I am bruised and my bike is in need of £1000 worth of repairs. I have witnesses confirming it was the other guy's fault but he has told my solicitors he will counter-claim for his more serious injuries. He says he was waved across by the car driver at the front of the queue. Surely he is to blame here, not me?

Sean Thomas, Halifax

Filtering is perfectly legal despite what defendant solicitors and third party insurers claim. Recent case law has helpfully discussed filtering speeds (relative to lines of stationary traffic) and apportionment of liability – that is the share of blame attaching to rider and the other person involved. Recent cases suggest if a line of traffic is stationary then a speed of 15mph would be appropriate whereas 20mph may not be.

In your case I am not really clear why, if the chap at the front of the queue waved this guy out, you were doing 20mph unless the lights had just changed and you intended to keep on going. However, it seems likely that primary responsibility for the accident rests with the pedestrian. He cannot rely on another road user waving him out. He must satisfy himself that he was safe for him to cross the road.

Assuming the lights were in your favour you had right of way, I would press on with your claim and not be threatened about a counter claim – although be aware there may well be some share of responsibility but I would need to carefully analyse all the evidence before advising further in this respect.

Andrew Campbell, Bikelawyer. Visit www.bikelawyer.co.uk or email andrew@bikelawyer.co.uk

Bikelawyer

Motorcycle Accident Solicitors

ADVICE CENTRE: GETTING PULLED

How do I deal with the cops?

What if I get stopped?

I've returned to bikes after a 20-year break and I used to get an occasional roadside lecture for 'spirited' riding. Has the procedure when you are stopped by a police officer changed in that time?

Daniel Hill, Sydenham

It's not a foregone decision that the book will be thrown at you. But if you are condescending or arrogant, or come out with old chestnuts like: 'I am late for a meeting' or 'haven't you got something better to do?' then a warning could turn into a fixed penalty, and it is going to take a long time to 'process' you, meeting or no meeting.

Sergeant Paul Mostyn

Show us your papers

What documents, like a driving licence, do I have to carry by law, and what documents would you recommend that I carry anyway?

Arthur Capaldi, email

There is no legal requirement in this country to carry documents when you are out riding. If you are stopped you will get an HO/RT1, also known as a 'producer' or 'haughty'. In which case you have seven days from midnight on the day of offence to present both parts of your driving licence, insurance certificate, tax disc and any applicable MoT certificate at a police station of your choice.

But when an officer stops you they need to be satisfied that you are who you say you are as part of the Police and Criminal Evidence Act. So I'd always advise someone to carry at least the plastic part of your licence as it's got a photo, home address and licence categories on it as that can be checked on the Police National Computer in minutes.

If you haven't got your licence, a 15-minute stop could take hours while we try to discover who you are and where you live. If the offence was serious you could be arrested while we identify your home address to serve a summons to

Sergeant Paul Mostyn



Pull over, take your helmet off and never, ever, act cocky