

## WINTERIZING YOUR BIKE

Proper storage of your bike is important for safe, trouble free operation in the spring. Following are some tips to get your bike ready for the winter months ahead. These tips are very general. If you have any questions, be sure to go by what your owner's manual or dealer says.

- Wash and wax the bike. This helps prevent rust and corrosion.
- Take the bike for one last ride to completely dry it and heat up the oil. While you're out there, fill up the gas tank and add some gas stabilizer (optional) according to the directions. The less air that can get in the tank the better. When it's cold outside, the gas inside the tank will contract creating a vacuum and outside air will be drawn in through the vent tube. If this air is moist, water vapor will condense on the inside of your tank.
- If your bike has fuel petcocks, turn them to "OFF".
- Change the oil and filter while the engine is warm. Old oil contains acids which can corrode engine internals if left over time.
- Check the antifreeze condition and concentration after the engine has cooled down.
- Store your motorcycle in a low-traffic area. This *should* be obvious, but for some reason it's not. Don't store your motorcycle in a location where anyone is likely to trip on it, tip it over, drop a tool on it, or dent it with a car door.
- Park the bike on the center stand in the storage area. This will take some of the weight off the tires. If you do not have a center stand, support the bike under the engine to take most of the weight off the tires. The tires do not have to be completely off the floor; raising the bike just enough to relieve the load from the tires will help prevent distortion and flat spots.
- Inflate the tires to the maximum pressure as indicated on the sidewall, but remember that tires typically lose approximately one pound of pressure per month.
- For extended storage, remove the spark plugs and put a tablespoon or two of oil in each plug hole. Reinstall the plugs. Activate the starter for about one second, just long enough to spread the oil around the cylinders but not long enough for the bike to start.
- Remove the battery from the bike and store it in a safe place. Keep the battery fully charged. A "smart" charger such as Battery Tender or Battery Minder is recommended. These chargers turn themselves on and off as needed so that your battery won't overcharge. Check the electrolyte level monthly and replenish it with distilled water as needed. A fully charged healthy battery will not freeze in cold storage, but if it makes you feel better, bring it in the house.
- Wipe down the chrome fork tubes and any other chrome with a light oil or WD-40. Don't get it on the brakes or tires though.
- Lubricate throttle and clutch cables. After a long riding season, the lubrication in the cable housing can break down, causing the cables to bind and possibly break.
- Clean and lubricate your chain with a good chain lube.

- Never use a plastic sheet or tarp directly to cover your bike or serious rust damage from condensation may occur in unheated storage. However, a light sheet or blanket under a tarp may help by acting like a wick to absorb moisture.
- Once a week, rotate the wheels a bit to change the spot on the tires where the weight is resting.
- Check for signs of rodents nesting in the bike and remove the critters if found. Remember, the airbox is a favorite nesting place for mice, and spiders like to build webs in the handlebar switches, causing switch problems. You may want to cover the air intake and tailpipes with plastic bags but remember to remove them in the spring.

Now that your bike is snug for the winter, let it rest. Don't be tempted to start it to hear it run. Mother Nature has a funny way of condensing water in your motor oil and engine. If you start your bike, run it until the engine oil reaches 212 degrees to dissipate the moisture. If you only run it for a few minutes, all you will do is spread that moisture throughout the engine, which will cause rust and corrosion.