

Motorcycle Maintenance / Safety

Engine Oil:

The engine oil in a motorcycle is checked in 1 of 2 ways;

1. Dipstick. (same as a car)
The dipstick will have an upper and lower mark and the oil level must be between them.
2. Viewing Window.

On the side of the engine there will be a glass window and an upper and lower mark, the motorcycle is held upright, the oil level should be visible and between the marks.

Engine oil should be checked at least once per week and most of the time when the engine is cold although the vehicle owner's manual should be read to confirm exact procedure and oil specification.

Steering:

The steering should be checked before every ride.

1. Turn the handle bars fully to the left or right and then fully to the other side, there should be no binding or tightness and no abnormal noises heard.
2. Hold the handle bars straight and the front brake on, push the motorcycle forwards sharply, the front of the motorcycle will dive down and return up. Listen for clicking noises which could be worn steering bearings.

(If in doubt consult a qualified technician)

Brake Operation:

The front and rear brakes should be checked for operation before every ride!

1. Sit on the motorcycle, pull the front brake and push the bike forward. The front will dive but the wheel should not move. The brake should feel firm.
2. Sit on the motorcycle, press the rear brake pedal and push the bike forward. The rear wheel should not move. The pedal should feel firm.

Brake/Clutch Fluid:

Brake & clutch fluid levels should be checked before every ride.

Usually there are 1 or 2 reservoirs on the handlebars at the brake and clutch levers. Check the viewing window and ensure the fluid level is between the upper and lower marks.

The rear reservoir is usually located near the rear brake lever or under the seat and may be a different looking container but will still have an upper and lower mark that the fluid must lie between.

A top up of fluid may be required but a qualified technician should inspect the brakes for wear if the fluid is found low.

Electrical components:

The ignition switch (key) will need to be on

Lights (low, high beam and pass switch), indicators, horn, hazard lights (if equipped), emergency engine kill switch, Brake lights should all be checked before every ride.

Drive chain:

The drive chain should be checked at least once per week and should be set as per owner's manual.

1. Drive chain should be correct tension as per manual.
2. Sufficiently lubricated
3. Pull the chain at the most rear point, if the chain moves a lot it is probably worn and should be seen by a qualified technician.

A Motorcycle may have a drive shaft or a belt instead of a chain and don't require adjustment.

Tyres:

Tyres should be checked visually before every ride for the following:

1. General condition, look for any cuts tears lumps or bumps
2. Minimum legal tread depth limit which is 1mm

Tyre pressure should be checked at least once per week and should be set according to the owner's manual. Pressure should be checked using a calibrated tyre pressure gauge and when the tyre is cold (before any riding) as the air inside will expand when the tyre is warm and show an inaccurate reading.