

Storage Preparation Checklist

Riding around with your friends with the wind in your hair is one of the greatest feelings a person can experience. But sooner or later you're going to have to pack away your two-wheeler. When that time comes, whether you live in a colder climate or just have no room to store a street bike in your home, keeping the family motorcycle in storage is a great option to have. However, putting it in a rental unit without any preparation will likely bring up issues when you are ready to ride again.

Make sure you have all the important paperwork

Before you do any transporting, take a minute to make sure that the vehicle's insurance card, title and license are all up to date.

Vehicle storage does have a few requirements:

- Motorcycles must be in running condition or loaded on a trailer.
- You will be asked to show registration and/or title.
- Depending on the state, vehicle storage tax will vary.

Getting your bike in shape.

Gather all the necessary tools:

- Cleaning cloths
- Soap
- Sponge
- Spark plug wrenches
- 4 or 5 quarts of standard/high-quality engine oil
- Oil filter
- Oil pan
- Gasoline
- Gas stabilizer
- Motorcycle exhaust plugs
- Battery trickle charger
- Motorcycle cover

Engine Care: Change the oil

After you take your bike out for one last ride on the open road, treat it right with a decent oil change and some high-quality oil. Old oil is full of sediment and chemicals that could damage the bike's engine. Each motorcycle is built differently, so you'll want to consult your owner's manual to figure out what kind of oil the bike uses, how much you'll need and what kind of filter matches your model. To change the oil:

- Place the oil pan and old newspapers directly below the bike's oil plug.

- Remove the oil plug with your socket wrench and let the dirty, used oil flow into the pan.
- Unscrew the old oil filter.
- Before you insert the new filter, smear a little bit of the old oil around its O-ring.
- Replace the oil drain plug.
- Remove the oil cap and pour the correct amount of oil into the engine.

Oil your bike down

Moisture is public enemy No. 1 when you are talking about how to properly protect and store your motorcycle. In colder climates, tiny crystals of water can build up in your engine that can cause rust. This is why it's important to oil your bike before putting it in storage.

- Start with turning the engine on to remove any lingering moisture.
- Once the engine is warm, you can turn off the engine and remove the bike's spark plugs.
- Squirt a little bit of warm engine oil in the spark plug holes.
- Consult the owner's manual on how to turn over the engine by hand. This will lubricate the cylinder walls.

Storage Preparation Checklist (cont.)

- Take a look at the bike's piston rings and valve seats and oil those down too.
- Replace your spark plugs with a new set.

Wash, wax and service

After replacing the engine oil, give your motorcycle a bath and a wax job.

- Get all the dirt, dust and grime off of every nook and cranny in the seat, engine, exhaust pipes and wheels before the grime hardens.
- Wash and wax the exterior.
- Lube up the chains,
- Shine the chrome
- Check each cable for tears or frays.
- Check your tires for wear and access if they need to be replaced. Consult your owner's manual and inflate the tires to the right pressure.

Fill the gas tank

Fill your tank with gas and add the recommended amount of fuel stabilizer to prevent any issues with the fuel system. Let the engine run for a few minutes to let the stabilizer settle in.

Check the other fluids

Consult your owner's manual once again and do a quick check to see if you need to fill up on your brake, coolant and clutch fluids. If you live in colder climates, double check that your bike has enough antifreeze.

- Brake fluid check
- Clutch fluid check
- Coolant check

Battery care

What you'll need:

- Socket wrenches
- Screwdrivers
- Owner's manual and repair guidelines
- Trickle charger
- Outlet

Remove the battery

- First you will have to remove the battery from its terminal.
- Refer to the owner's manual on how to take off the bike's seat.
- Next, take your screwdriver and unscrew the connectors from your battery. Once you are sure that the battery is disconnected, lift it out of its case.
- Remember which side was attached to the red (+) wire.
- Replace the seat.
- Before attaching the charger to the battery, connect the red clamp to the red (+) terminal.
- The other side is the negative half of the battery. You'll attach the black (+) to that end.
- Plug in the trickle charger. This will send out a low, steady stream of electricity to your battery.

Choosing a storage unit

When choosing a storage unit for your motorcycle or street bike you'll want to consider a few things.

- Is the rental unit climate controlled? Do I need it to be?
- What size unit best fits my storing needs?

A 5'x10' indoor space can fit one motorcycle.
- How many motorcycles am I storing?
- What rental unit fits my budget?

Consult a rental unit's service center to help you determine what space would best fit your needs.

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