

INSPECTION TIME

What do I mean by inspection time?

Why should I inspect my bike?

What does that have to do with motorcycle safety?

When is the best time to do a thorough inspection?

Let's take these one question at a time. First, what do I mean by inspection time? As motorcyclists, we should do two types of inspections on our bike. The quick PRE-RIDE check and a more thorough T-CLOCK inspection.

The pre-ride check is a quick daily check of the bike's electrical system; i.e. lights horn, turn signals, fluid levels, cable free play, suspension, and both tires' tread and air pressure. This should be done everyday before you ride.

The T- CLOCK inspection is a system to inspect the overall condition of your bike. It should be done during/after cleaning and at a minimum once a week. Let's break T-CLOCK down to its components:

T- Tires

Condition: Tread depth, wear, cuts, weathering, evenly seated, bulges, and imbedded objects.

Air Pressure: Check when cold; adjust to manufacturer's limits for load.

Spokes: Bent, broken, missing; check at the top of the wheel. Tap with wrench or screwdriver a "ring" is OK - "thud", loose spoke; requires service.

Cast: Check for cracks and dents.

Rims: Check for out of round/ trueness = 5mm. Spin the wheel, index against stationary pointer.

Bearings: Grasp the wheel top and bottom then flex; no freeplay between hub and axle, no growl when spinning.

Seals: Make sure the seals aren't cracked, cut, torn. Check for excessive grease on the outside, reddish - brown outside.

C- Controls

Levers - Condition: Any broken, bent, or cracked should be replaced.

Mounts should all be tight. Ball ends on handlebar levers.

Pivots: Lubricate all pivot points.

Cables - Condition: Check for fraying, kinks, lubrication at the ends and full length of cable.

Routing: No interference or pulling at steering head, suspension, no sharp angles, wire looms in place.

Hoses - Condition: Look for cuts, cracks, leaks, bulges, chaffing, and deterioration.

Throttle - Operation: Moves freely and snaps closed when released. Does not affect engine speed when handlebars are turned.

L-Lights & Electrics

Battery - Condition: Terminals, should be clean and tight. To prevent corrosion coat with a thin covering of petroleum jelly or bearing grease. Electrolyte level in each cell should be checked and filled if necessary. Fill with distilled water not tap water. Make sure the battery is held in place securely.

Vent tube: Should not be kinked. Make sure it is routed properly and not plugged.

Lenses - Condition: Check for cracked or broken lenses replace if found. Make sure all are mounted securely. Also check for excessive condensation.

Reflectors - Condition: Make sure none of them are cracked or broken. Replace any that are.

Wiring - Condition: Look for any chaffing of the insulation or fraying.

Routing: No pinching of cables, there should be no interference or pulling at the steering head or suspension. All wire looms and ties should be in place. Make sure all connections are clean and tight.

Headlamp(s)- Condition: Check for cracks. Ensure the reflector is clean and the lamp(s) are mounted securely. Check the adjustment system for proper operation.

Aim: Height and left / right.

O - Oil and Fluids

Levels - Engine oil: Check while warm on the centerstand on level surface.

Hypoid gear oil: Transmission, rear drive and drive shaft. Hydraulic fluid: Brakes, clutch at the reservoir or sight glass.

Coolant: Reservoir and / or coolant recovery tank - water cooled only.

Fuel: Check at the tank or fuel gauge.

Leaks - Engine oil: Check all gaskets, housing, seals.

Hypoid gear oil: Look at all gaskets, seals and breathers. Hydraulic fluid: Check all hoses, master cylinders and calipers.

Coolant: Check the radiator, all hoses, recovery tank, fittings, and pipes.

Fuel: Look at the fuel lines, taps and carbs.

C-Chassis and Chain

Frame - Condition: Look for cracks at gussets, accessory mounts. Check paint for cracks and lifting.

Steering head bearings: No detent or tight spots through the travel. Raise the front wheel check for play by pulling/pushing on the forks.

Swing arm bushings / bearings: Raise the rear wheel check for play by pushing and pulling the swing arm.

Suspension- Forks: Ensure smooth travel, equal air pressure / damping and anti-dive settings.

Shock(s): Check for smooth travel, equal pre-load / air pressure / damping settings. Make sure the linkage move freely and is lubricated.

Chain / Belts - Tension: Check at tightest point. Refer to owners manual for procedure.

Lubrication: Into side plates when hot. Note: Belts do not require lubrication.

Sprockets: Make sure the teeth are not hooked and they are securely mounted.

Fasteners - Threaded: Tighten all threaded fasteners. Replace any missing bolts, screws and nuts.

Clips: Check for broken or missing, replace as necessary.

Cotterpins: Make sure all are in place, not broken or rusted. Replace as necessary.

K - Kickstand/Centerstand

Condition: Make sure it is not bent and look for cracks.

Retention: Look at the spring. Make sure it is in place and has sufficient tension to hold the stand in place.

Sidestand - Condition: Make sure it is not bent and look for cracks. Check safety cut-out switch, pad, or self - retracting mechanism if equipped.

You say, "man that seems like a lot of work." It really isn't that much work if you combine the T-CLOCK with the weekly cleaning of your bike. It only takes about 30 to 45 minutes to do the inspection.

A good weekly inspection of your bike will enable you to prevent something unexpected breaking down on you when you need it most. You will also become familiar with the different components of your bike, which is something every rider needs to know. A weekly inspection can also save you money in the long run, correcting minor problems before they turn into major repairs.