

Time To Winterize Your Bike?

By Shawn Anderson, Certified Harley-Davidson Technician



This is very much the time of year that a lot of us unhappily decide to park our bikes for our wet winters. I know there is a bunch of us that do just that, “park ‘em”. We need to give our rides a little bit of love and respect before we decide to stash them away for the winter. At a minimum we should make sure they are clean and dry. All the bug guts seem to have something harsh in them that cause the chrome to pit up and blemish. Next, it is very important to park our babies with a full tank of freshly treated fuel using a fuel stabilizer of some sort. Harley sells their own stabilizer, it’s great stuff. Any other automotive type fuel stabilizer is fine as long as you mix according to instructions. A full tank of gas will collect less moisture which means less rust in your tank and a better running bike come spring. Personally, come spring, I dump that fuel and use it in my lawn mower, but some might say that is picking fly poop out of pepper.

Dirty oil is not something I like to keep in my ride over the parked months. The products of combustion that end up as "blow by", passing through the rings into the oil carry acids that can eat pit marks and rust into internal engine components. These pit marks and rust are very undesirable. Although we don't see them they will eat our motors up and wear them out faster than we want.

Remember, brake fluid should be changed every two years. Our brakes are mostly made of aluminium and it seems that aluminium really likes to collect or absorb moisture, getting trapped in our brake fluid causing more parts to get eaten up from the inside. A bottle of brake fluid is much cheaper than brake callipers or master cylinders.

Let's not forget about our tires now. If you have a method of getting your bike safely lifted off the ground so that your suspension is hung and tires are off the ground, great, do it. If not I suggest making sure that your tires are inflated to the maximum recommended setting according to the reading on the sidewall of the tire, not the limit on the frame sticker or the owner's manual. This will help avoid flat spots in your tires come spring. Remember to top up your tires over the winter months, they will lose air just sitting there, sort of like a balloon being tired at the end of a party. Set your tire pressures back down to the proper recommended setting before you ride again.

Lastly, if you had any issues with your bike during the riding season, make yourself notes and leave them with your bike. I have had some issues in the past that have bothered me all riding season, and thought I would just deal with in the winter – I'd rather ride now!! I would park my bike and forget to make notes. Spring would come and I would go for my first ride and then be all bummed out with "that damn problem again". I should have left myself a note. Funny how we forget about our rides when we "park em". Do yourself a favour, deal with it over the winter and reap the benefits of lower winter rates offered at Mountainview HD. Take care of things over the winter months and be ready to rock come spring.

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