



The Straight and Narrow

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Man and Machine



There are few things that we enjoy more in our lives than a beautiful sun shiny day, and being out on our bikes. But how quickly can that change when we run into unexpected problems or a situation that is less than desirable. There are so many things out there that we have little or no control over, that we should take extra care with the things that we can control.

So what can we do to be better prepared for a good days ride?

The Machine:

We all are, or should be familiar with the T-clock pre-ride checks. That is probably the best place to begin. These are all simple straight forward things that we should be doing as second nature. But you never know when you will run across something there that could mean big trouble for you. It is a good practice to make this a standard pre-ride check for EVERY ride! **T**-Tires and Wheels, **C**-Controls, **L**-Lights, **O**-Oil, **C**-Chassis, **K**-Kickstand.

Beyond that what can we do?

The next thing is that we should make sure that we are using a dependable trustworthy mechanic to do the things that we are not comfortable doing on the bikes. But we should be careful with this, and not let ourselves get into the familiar rut of over trusting them. Regardless of how much we trust someone or how long they have been taking care of our vehicle. Remember that everyone is capable of having a bad day; everyone has a point when they are rushed to the point that they can forget or skip something. No reputable service provider will take offense to you asking questions or watching them work. If you find someone that does, I would rethink whether I would want to have them work on my bike.

Here are a few things that we can keep an eye on by just observing a service man.

Tires: Should be the recommended type and size for your bike. Rotation of the tire should be as marked on the sidewall of the tire. Valve stems should be **replaced** at every tire change. Air pressure, though not that critical at service time, should be **monitored** closely. While they have the bike up in the air and the tires off is an excellent time to take a look around underneath the bike.

Fluids: All fluids should be as prescribed by the manufacturer; including Oil weights, and grades. Be extra cautious as to the DOT rating of brake fluids. In the case of the GL1500; use of DOT 5 brake fluids in this bike CAN cause catastrophic failure in the brake and clutch systems.

The Man (or woman):

Make sure that you are up to the ride at hand. Never ride when you are tired, in ill health, are if you are burdened by the worries of the day. All of these can and will slow reaction time, and besides that it will not be an enjoyable ride for you.

We should NEVER throw a leg over a bike after using any alcohol or drugs. NO EXCEPTIONS!

If you are having physical problems that need to be addressed, see that they are attended to before you take off on your next ride. Most of you know that I did very little riding during 3/4 of 2006. This was because I was having back trouble and rather than push my luck I opted to sit some of the rides out. Smart move? I think so.

Remember we have many chances to take those rides; there is no reason to endanger ourselves and others by going beyond our limits.

Hopefully you have seen something in here that will help you to have a few more good safe rides. After all isn't that what it is all about?

Till next time, ride safe, and have fun.

Dale and Kathy