

The Time is Coming!

Are you Ready?

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"It's that time... to take out and shake out your bike and yourself and get ready for your (our) first group ride"



Most every early or pre-riding season article I've seen is about preparing your bike, prepping yourself and starting off slowly to rebuild the muscle and mental memory to get moving at a higher speed, safely on the road again. This article will be no different as it is a very important process in kicking the riding season off right, and with our kick off ride quickly approaching, the time to prepare is now. Just like any other ride during the season, the RC will expect everyone attending the first ride of the season to be prepared mechanically, physically and mentally, and this article will help you get there.

First. Let's talk about your bike and getting your bike out of storage and ready to ride:

Just a quick note to all that may winter store their bike with a dealer and have the bike prepped or "summarized" so they just have to pick it up and go. Great if you do, but I would warn you to trust but verify. I know some of our club members have had out of storage issues, so keep in mind that no matter how good the service is from your dealer, people make mistakes and remembering it is your rump on that seat and maybe even a with loved one, and let's not forget about a whole group of club members you may be riding with for your first ride... That's not a risk I would like to take or have taken with me riding in the group.

I do not dealer store/prep, so this is what I need to do to get my bike ready.

By the way, some of the items in the "Obvious" list are part of T-CLOC(S/K), which is a great tool for getting and keeping your bike in top riding condition through the season, but I added important notes here in case you didn't get that far down in the article ☺

Addressing your bike -

Start off with some obvious items like:

Coverings – Remove all covers or plugs you may have used to keep dust off and pests out

Look for leaks – Check for leaks BEFORE you move your bike from it's winter storage area. If you noticed any spots on the floor you may want to trace the leak to it's origin and repair the cause. Look over the shocks and forks as well.

Tip: If you think you have a leak but it is hard to determine new spots from old spots on your floor, place a cut open brown paper bag, under your bike to help highlight new leaks.

Battery – Install and check charge level is good. Charge, "jump" or replace as needed. Reset electronics as needed. I would recommend Battery +. They will test the old one and install the new one for free (won't take a tip either)

Gas – Top off if not already and run some fresh fuel into the fuel system

Oil and lubes – Check levels or change as needed

Wash – A good time to wash as you may have items that you remove for storage (I do)

Inspect for loose parts – You can do this as you wash as you are touching all the parts anyway

Replace add-ons – Now that the wash is done... But I would not recommend adding new things at this point. Wait until after you have had a chance to ride the bike first and make sure nothing is broken. Then when you add the

new thing, if something does not work, you can somewhat safely assume it is because of the new thing or the work to get the new thing on, rather than an out of storage issue.

After you have your bike out of storage but before ride:

Performing a T-CLOCS or T-CLOCK review is a great way to start examining your bike. As all bikes are different, you must look up the proper specs and adjustments for your bike. There is a lot of online help if you need a hand getting started.

T-CLOCS/T-CLOCK is:

Tires or Wheels

Controls

Lights

Oils

Chassis

Stands / Kick-Stands

This is also a good time to look over and try on your gear so you don't find a "gotcha's" when getting ready for or out on, your first group ride.

Now to get yourself ready-

After you have your bike in riding shape, take your bike out for a short ride (alone and without the bike loaded down) to see if anything seems out of place or adjustment and address. When all is ready, you need to take some time ramping up your riding complexity to get really reacquainted with your bike. Then add your normal load and then a passenger if you want, all before you dedicate yourself to a group ride.

I know this sounds like a lot to do before getting out on your (our) first group ride but keep in mind that this is as important as having everyone in our club (and for that matter, as many other folks in the riding community) attend G.R.A.S.S. on a regular basis for the safety of the group, and I believe you would expect this same level of preparation from other folks attending our (or any other) rides you would attend.

Looking forward to seeing you there....

- Gene "Lucky" Rigsby