

# Used Motorcycle Inspection Checklist

- **NOTE:** When you schedule the in-person inspection, make sure to specify that you'd like to view the motorcycle cold. You want to see it before the engine has been started and warmed up. A hot engine can hide starting issues that may present themselves later on. A cold motorcycle could also have a worn battery that won't start the motorcycle well, and seeing it running may mislead you that all is well with the battery.

## Engine

- Look over the engine inspecting for any wear or damage that may be on the outside cases, engine block, or any fluid leaks where components meet.
- Check for coolant leaks on the top of the engine, oil leaks at gasket seams and the drain plug, and any oil drips beneath the motorcycle.

## Frame

- Look over the frame for any missing paint or corrosion protection that may allow the frame to rust if it is a steel rather than aluminum.
- Check for cracks along each piece or any missing pieces whether it has fallen off or been taken off purposely.

## Suspension

- Check for any leaks from shocks or struts that have seals that need to be replaced, or the units themselves need to be replaced. Any protective boots or covers should not have cracks that allow dirt in.
- Look at any bushings connecting suspension components for being dried out and cracked too.

## Bearings

- Most bearings on a motorcycle will be sealed and won't require much maintenance. They should not be greasy indicating the bearing has more grease on the outside than inside. Try to move each bearing and listen for any squeaks that can indicate the bearing needs to be re-greased (if possible) or potentially replaced.

## Fluid Leaks

- Look for indications of a fluid leak, which could be on the ground or a trail inside the motorcycle as it runs through the motorcycle down to the ground. There should be no oil leaks from the engine.
- Look for coolant leaks at all rubber hose connections and along the radiator. You may also be able to smell a leak, such as coolant smells sweet and oil is pungent also.

## Chain and Sprocket

- Look over the chain to ensure it is well greased. Chain grease is different than most others used on a motorcycle and it will have a waxy appearance. It's meant to stick to the chain and protect against dirt and moisture. It shouldn't come off as you spin the chain.
- The sprockets should be relatively clean with no visible cracks. Each sprocket should have sharp teeth that mesh with the chain. The teeth should be pointy or slightly rounded with some use, but not completely rounded like a dull butter knife.

## Cables and Wiring

- Look over the engine inspecting for any wear or damage that may be on the outside cases, engine block, or any fluid leaks where components meet. Check for coolant leaks on the top of the engine, oil leaks at gasket seams and the drain plug, and any oil drips beneath the motorcycle.

## Tires

- Look between the treads, you should see a depth indicator. If it shows signs of wear (meaning the tread is well worn), add tires to the 'need to be purchased soon' list.
- Look to see if the tires are cracked (sometimes called dry rotted) from sitting too long. Check their pressure with a simple pressure gauge to see if it is holding air.

## Bodywork

- Take note of the condition of any bodywork. Does it have any noticeable scratches, is anything missing, has anything been changed that you can see? If the motorcycle has some miles on it, the bodywork should look a little worn from rocks and bugs over the miles on the road. If the bodywork looks too perfect, it may have been replaced. Be sure to ask if it's the original for the motorcycle or if it has been replaced.

## Bar Ends, Brake Levers, and Footpegs

- Look to see if the bar ends, levers, and footpegs are scuffed or scratched. Be sure to ask the seller why. Did it just fall over in a parking lot, or did it hit the ground at a low speed?
- Check each item to make sure they are not bent from the normal shape, either from falling or if they were bent and then attempted to be straightened.

## Forks

- Check that the forks are straight and scratch-free. The seals shouldn't show any signs of leaking fluid, nor should they be cracked and have the potential to leak in the future. If they look worn, they should be added to the future replacement list.

## Battery

- Check the date on the battery tag. It should show a dot or a symbol on a month and year when it was first put into service on the motorcycle. A newer date may indicate the battery was replaced recently.
- Make sure the battery has a vent tube connected to it and that it is routed down away from the battery. It usually goes down inside the bodywork.
- The battery should be clean without debris on top of it (leaves, grass, bugs, etc.). The battery terminals should also be clean and show no corrosion with tight connections to the positive and negative cables.
- Take note if any other connections have been added to the battery cables or terminals. If so, be sure to ask what they are and why they are there.

## Brake Fluid

- Check the condition and the level of the brake fluid. The reservoir should be a transparent material or have a sight window with an indication of the appropriate level. If it is low, that can affect braking performance. You'll want it full to the indication mark before you take a test ride.
- The fluid should be a light tan or caramel color. As it becomes darker (to a dark brown) it should be replaced. The motorcycle owner's manual may dictate when the fluid should be replaced based on a mileage amount also.

## Fuel Tank

- Check the fuel tank from top to bottom. The top should have a tightly sealed cap that present no odor of gasoline.
- Look at each mounting point to ensure it has a rubber mount between the tank and the frame, and also that the connection point isn't cracked.
- There should be one or more rubber fuel lines from the bottom of the fuel tank to the engine. Make sure it isn't cracked, has clamps at end keeping it connected and properly sealed, and the tank has no visible leaks.

## Lighting

- Check that all lights are functioning, from turn signals flashing, indicators lighting up in the gauges, and the light on the license plate. If something doesn't work, be sure to ask why.

## Visual Check

- Stand back from the motorcycle and do a simple visual check. Print a few images of the motorcycle and take them with you to visually compare.