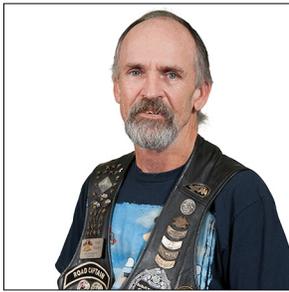


Loading the Motorcycle



By Mark Manley
Safety Officer

Spring is here! Thus starts warm weather riding and I'm sure a lot of trips have been in the making over the winter and I thought it would be a good idea to refresh our memories on loading the motorcycle for a trip.

Whether it's something you needed from the dealership, or gear for a two week trip, you'll end up carrying more than yourself and / or a passenger on your bike.

ALL loads should be secured to the machine not bungeed to the seat or try to balance between your legs. The best place is nearest the C.G. (center of gravity) of the bike which is just forward of the rider which means using a tank bag which if you own a cruiser and pending what kind not only might be a good thing it may be your only option.

There are appropriate places to carry loads on a motorcycle, your front forks and fenders are NOT two of them. If you have saddle bags and a tour pack you're set. If you don't have neither of these you can always buy a luggage rack or throw-over saddle bags and they always come in handy.

When you load saddlebags, keep equal weight on both sides. This is even more important if you're using throw-over saddlebags. If one side is heavier not only can it cause an imbalance of the bike, but the imbalanced side could be on the side the muffler is on and guess what: a possible fire.

When loading the tour pack on a touring bike or a luggage rack behind the seat on a cruiser try to keep it light and if

you have a rack on the lid it usually has a 10 lb. limit or so to it. There's a good reason for it, tour packs are aft of the rear axle and on the 14's and up the tour packs are adjustable from the factory and so are some of the docking brackets you can buy for older touring bikes and what happens if there's too much weight it can turn a well handling bike into a nightmare. Remember what I said about the C.G. earlier on, think of it in terms of using a cheater bar to gain extra leverage. Loading heavy aft of the rear axle is dangerous. The same applies to a luggage rack mounted behind the seat.

When you stop to take a break it's always a good idea to check your load if the bike feels heavy to one side take a few minutes to re position things to correct the issue.

If you're not sure on how to load there's a couple things you can do, one is to refer to your owner's manual, another would be check with another rider that does a lot of long trips, and pending what kind of trip and length of it, mailing some things to your destination(s) could be advantageous to you.

In closing, always set your tire pressures and rear shocks for the weight you're carrying per your owner's manual. T-CLOCK your bike a day or two before, you might want to think about taking an extra qt. of oil, and octane boost if you're going out west. Take the touring handbook you get from H.O.G. so you know



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where the closest Harley dealer is in the event you break down or need something. Finally when pulling into a gas station for fuel especially if you're going out WEST, before putting the nozzle in your tank check the ethanol content of the fuel . If you see that it has METHANOL — DON'T USE IT!!! It will damage the fuel components and the engine. Mark

T-CLOCK : Inspection of TIRES, CONTROLS,
LIGHTS, OIL, CHASSIS, KICKSTAND.

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