

# Winterize your Ride - Fear, Uncertainty, & Doubt (FUD)

By Claude "No-chrome" Mitchell

It's that time of year again; time to put your mighty steed up for the winter. Since this is my first winter I was extremely interested in just how to put a bike up for the winter. I learned (to no surprise) that for storing a bike everybody has an idea of just how it should be done (everybody has an opinion and another part of their anatomy). What is the best, well in my investigation I didn't find a "BEST" what I found were general practices, and a lot of just plain old mother wit". On one hand you have individuals saying do this, and then another saying do that. I will attempt to give you a look into the mysterious world of "WINTERIZING" WHOOOOOO HAHAAHAHAHAHA!!!! (Insert sinister laugh here).

When people talk about putting up their ride, one thing comes to mind FUD. FUD is Fear, Uncertainty, & Doubt. The fear about if what your doing will harm your bike, the uncertainty about what your doing, and the doubt about doing it. This article is the "FUD BUSTER"

Typically most winterizing procedures involve certain sets of equipment or elements. The most common are...

- Oil
- Gas
- Tires
- Battery
- Surface prep & Covering
- And for added excitement; rodent prevention (ew!!)

HERE WE GO....

## Oil

FUD.

Most sources agree to "change the Oil". This is because "Thars acid in that thar crankcase". This is the most commonly accepted practice; however 2 gentlemen had an interesting take on changing the oil.

Mike Allen of Maine...

*"I have never changed oil before putting away. They don't do that at a dealer, and bikes sit all winter. The bikes at assembly plants don't get oil changes before lay up. No need to change oil."*

OR

Mr. John Luciano of Connecticut

*"I change my oil every 3,000 miles if that happens just before storage it gets changed if not it gets changed after winter."*

FUD BUST...

The ACID effect is the most common reason given for CHANGING engine oil. It seems that these acids form during the normal combustion, condensation, heating, etc, of an external combustion engine. Both of these gentlemen have very valid reasons for NOT changing the Oil. The bottom line is this; if you're at the end of a change cycle, then change the oil it, If not let it be. There seems to be plenty of convincing evidence that not changing it doesn't hurt, but changing doesn't either. If your really in fear of the dreaded "CRANKCASE ACID BEAST" (insert scream here) then opt for the change. I wouldn't bother with the filter unless it was at the end of the life of the present oil. If it is, then "FILTER BE GONE WITH THEE".

## GAS

FUD.... FUD BUST

No FUD here. The OVERWHELMING OPINION is that Stabul is your friend, WITHIN THE DARK CONFINES OF YOUR FUEL SYSTEM it is your only friend. Makes one wonder why they just don't put Stabul in the gas anyway.

The only controversy is when to put it in the tank, some say put it in with the tank full, and then run the bike for about 10 or 15 minutes. Others say let the tank get ½ empty, then Stabul it, run the bike, 10 or 15 minutes, then fill the tank. Either way the stabul MUST be allowed to infiltrate the fuel injectors, or trouble will be the result.

## TIRES

FUD...

Tires are malleable compounds, and will acquire a "flat spot" if allowed to sit for a period of time. Or in a worst case scenario the flat spot will weaken the tire.

FUD Bust...

There are really 3 schools of thought here.

1. Get them off the ground
2. Leave them on the ground, and move the bike every couple of weeks.
3. Dont worry about it.

The Get-them-off the ground groups subscribe to the notion that if a tire remains motionless for a period of time it will get a "flat spot" in its circular shape. A plausible statement, however referring to the "dealers-don't-change-oil" paradigm, you have to also realize that dealers-don't-rotate-tires every 2 weeks either.

Getting the bike off the ground is easy if you have a center stand. You trike owners are pretty much out-of-luck. Your only option is to raise the rear end of bike with a jack then place the rear axle on Jack-stands, or the ever popular cinder blocks. The downside to this is I don't really believe that the front fork was meant to bear the entire weight of the trike (NOT A GOOD THING). If you support the "raised" trike by its front wheel then you've now set up the front wheel for the flat spot.

Lets look at the second option of starting the bike and moving it a few inches every couple of weeks. Not so fast bucko; doing this ignores one very important fact. Starting a gasoline engine and NOT letting it achieve operating temperature creates condensation on the engine which CAN form acids (Whoooooo there's the "A" word again), and possibly harm the engine. No engine will achieve operating temperature in the time it takes to move a vehicle 6 inches. So whatever harm you are avoiding by moving the bike you are creating by not allowing the bike to fully warm up.

COULD a tire POSSIBLY gain a flat spot from sitting on one position? Perhaps, is it worth the effort to move it every 2 weeks, or more, possibly not!!! But if you feel that you must, please don't start it, just kick it into neutral and push it.

Third option... Dont worry about it... take your chances

## BATTERY

FUD....

You must remove the battery from the bike. Then you must put the unit on a charger. No you don't "Yes you do!!!!

FUD BUSTER...

If you leave the battery in the bike it WILL discharge it. The computer and associated electronics will do this in most modern vehicles. The most common method of charging a mc battery is the (taaaa daaa) Battery Tender ®. There are other units available that will accomplish the "charge-maintain cycle", However this unit has set the standard in keeping your zap box alive all winter long. Should you remove it boils down to personal choice, however you must remember that a charging battery will vent some fumes. This is ok if your bike is out in the open, but consider if you bike is covered for the winter. You must ask yourself where will these acidic fumes go (There's the "A" word again) could the possibly be trapped under the cover against the paint or chrome?

### **SURFACE PREP, COVERING & CRITTER CONTROL**

FUD...

Bike must be protected, but if you cover it with a tarp, or even a nose bra will the unit will promote dampness between the paint and the covering, and fade or discolor the surface. Or if the unit is not cleaned prior to storage the abrasiveness of the surface dirt will cause micro scratches in the finish. Additionally a cover will make a nice nesting area for the neighborhood critters. During a long winter's night, it is not unusual for a mouse, rat, etc. to take up residence in the innards of a Goldwing.

FUD BUSTER....

**OUTSIDE STORAGE**

If you have to keep your steed outside, for God sake COVER IT. A breathable waterproof covering is preferable. A good washing and a final wax will allow for a more slippery surface for the cover, allowing it to move on a smooth surface in the event of wind induced movement.

IF you store your bike out of doors there is the possibility that a critter will take up residence under the cover. Cats, Rodents, Skunks, Raccoons, Squirrels, and even the occasional Bird, are all looking for places to "hunker down" for the winter. A crevice in a covered Goldwing provides a wonderful condo for the wayward critters. Damage can range from chewed wires, debris in inappropriate places (like an air filter, exhaust pipe) chewed seats, or wiring, critter POOP, and the occasional carcass of the poor animal that couldn't survive the winter. Lets not forget the possibility of uncovering your bike and finding a whole family of critters born over the winter that have turned you bike into a condominium.

One thing is certain do not use a blanket of a plastic tarp, a blanket will hold moisture against the paint, and a tarp will scratch, and also possibly hold moisture.

### **THE FINAL FUD BUST**

You can see there are more ideas about what you should do for your bike in the winter. Some are just plain common sense, some are not so obvious.

Covering is a must, even if you keep your bike in a garage, dust and dirt will settle on it, the instant you open the garage door.

Changing the oil is really a matter of personal preference, one thing is for sure, you can never change your oil too much, so if your in doubt, go ahead change it. IT can't hurt, and it won't cost much.

Stabil is a must; gasoline has a useful shelf life of about 3 months.

If you do not preserve it, it WILL create varnish / shellac in the engine, and carburetor, and fuel injectors. Repairing this mess can cost hundreds of dollars. Like the ad used to say; “you can pay me now, or you can pay me later”

Tires are a crap shoot, I personally have never heard of a tire that got a flat spot for sitting to much. However if you think this is a concern, then once a month kick her into neutral, and push it about 4 inches to change the sit spot. If you choose to start it, then **LET THE BIKE WARM UP FULLY**. Allowing it to fully warm up will allow the moisture in the crankcase to evaporate.

Keep the critters out of the bike, Mothballs work wonders. There has been mixed success using the electronic rat chasers. Some have had success putting steel wool in the exhaust pipe, (don't forget to take it out in the spring).

The bottom line is USE your common sense, protect your ride for the winter, and there will be less to fix, and keep you from riding in the spring.

*"NoChrome"*