

I haven't had to replace it sooner. If the standing voltage (fully charged—at least one hour after removing the charger at the end of at least a 20 mile ride) is less than 12.3 volts, the battery is getting tired.

Electrical Connections: After the wiring harness on Voni's R1100RS tried to burn itself up in the middle of rural South Dakota, I have taken to carefully inspecting electrical connections for signs of fraying insulation or corrosion. I would certainly inspect and clean any suspect connections before any long trip. Take connections apart, inspect, and clean with the electrical contact cleaner that is available at most auto parts stores.

Wheel Bearings: Every time I change a tire, I manually rotate the wheel bearing with my thumb. If you feel or hear any sign of grit then the bearing ought to be replaced if it is a sealed bearing (later than 1985), or cleaned and regreased if an unsealed bearing from an earlier model.

Alternator Belts on Oilheads: Need to be replaced at 36,000 mile intervals. If you are close, replace the belt.

Driveshafts: If you are riding an Airhead GS with more than 30,000 miles on the driveshaft, it may fail on your trip. If you are riding a Monolever K75 or K100, check the splines at the rear of the driveshaft where it connects to the final drive. If you are riding a Paralever K bike or Oilhead and have more than 100,000 miles on the driveshaft, check the universal joints for notches or looseness.

Final Drives: Drain the final drive oil and carefully inspect the magnet on the drain plug. A gray paste is normal. Shiny slivers are only normal on a new final drive for the first few thousand miles. Shiny flakes are signs of impending failure. Refill per the specifications in your owner's manual.

Spare Parts: I don't usually carry spare parts. On very long trips, I sometimes carry a spare alternator belt and clutch cable if the bikes we are taking use these parts. If I were riding an Airhead, I would carry an alternator rotor.

I do, however, know the telephone number of my favorite dealer, and have on occasions had to have something sent overnight to get a bike back on the road. Traveling in the western half of the United States, you cannot count on finding a dealership nearby in the next town. Carry your Anonymous Book, too!

Have a good trip! See you in Gillette!

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