

12) Owning and maintaining a motorcycle

Accessories and modifications

A safe motorcycle can be quickly turned into a menace. If you add accessories incorrectly or change the motorcycle in any way, it may seriously degrade the motorcycle's handling. Here are a few things to avoid:

Highway pegs

These are pegs mounted on the front of the motorcycle to allow the rider to lean back. The pegs may make the rider more comfortable.

The problem is:

- It takes too long to reach the foot brake in an emergency.
- Operators don't have the footing needed to maintain balance.

Sissy bars

This is a high bar or frame mounted on the back of the seat.

The problem is:

- When loaded, they change the motorcycle's centre of gravity and affect its balance.
- They make it harder for the operator and passenger to get off the motorcycle in a hurry.

Ape hangers

These are high handlebars that extend above the operator's shoulders.

The problem is:

- They reduce steering control.
- They block your vision.
- They are illegal.

Extended forks

These are much longer than standard forks and are installed by some riders for styling.

The problem is:

- They reduce steering precision.
- They increase stress on the frame and steering components.

Road race handlebars

Extra low, clamp-on type bars are sometimes used by riders.

The problem is:

They may create discomfort and fatigue and make it harder to make good shoulder checks.

Touring modifications

Fairings, luggage attachments and containers may overload the bike, change its handling characteristics or cause a tire blowout.