

'77

HONDA
MODEL
CB 550F

OWNER'S MANUAL



HONDA MOTOR CO., LTD. 1976

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IMPORTANT NOTICE

● OPERATOR AND PASSENGER.

This motorcycle is designed and constructed to carry the operator and one passenger. However, do not exceed the vehicle capacity load shown on the tire information label.

● ON-ROAD USE.

This motorcycle is not equipped with a spark arrester and is designed and constructed to be used only on the road. Operation in forest covered, bush covered, or grass covered areas may not be legal. Check local laws and regulations before riding in these areas.

● READ OWNER'S MANUAL CAREFULLY.

All information, illustrations, directions and specifications included in this publication are based on the latest product information available at the time of approval for printing. HONDA MOTOR CO., LTD. reserves the right to make changes at any time without notice and without incurring any obligation whatsoever. No part of this publication may be reproduced without written permission.

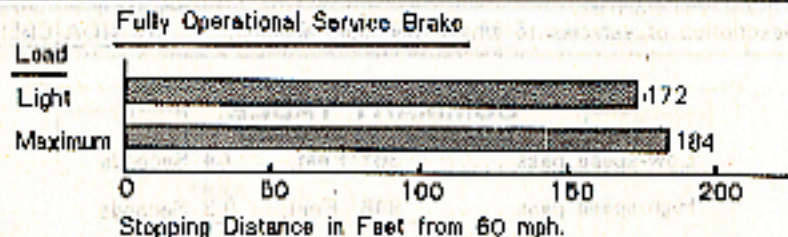
CONSUMER INFORMATION

VEHICLE STOPPING DISTANCE

This figure indicates braking performance that can be met or exceeded by the vehicles to which it applies, without locking the wheels under different conditions of loading.

The information presented represents results obtainable by skilled drivers under controlled road and vehicle conditions, and the information may not be correct under other conditions.

Description of vehicles to which this table applies: HONDA CB550F



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ACCELERATION AND PASSING ABILITY

This figure indicates passing times and distances that can be met or exceeded by the vehicles to which it applies, in the situations diagrammed on the next page.

The low-speed pass assumes an initial speed of 20 MPH and a limiting speed of 35 MPH. The high-speed pass assumes an initial speed of 50 MPH and a limiting speed of 80 MPH.

NOTICE: The information presented represents results obtainable by skilled drivers under controlled road and vehicle conditions, and the information may not be correct under other conditions.

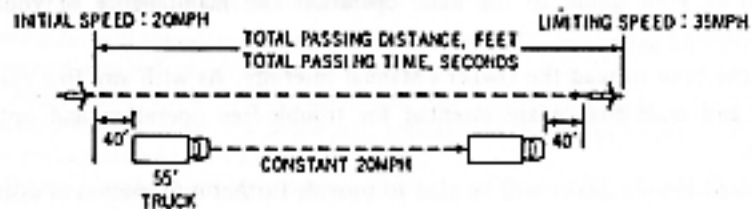
Description of vehicles to which this table applies: HONDA CB550F

SUMMARY TABLE:

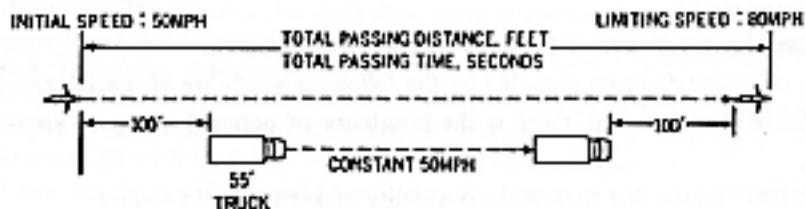
Low-speed pass 361 Feet; 7.4 Seconds

High-speed pass 948 Feet; 9.3 Seconds

LOW-SPEED



HIGH-SPEED



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This booklet is your guide to the basic operation and maintenance of your new motorcycle.

Please take the time to read the Owner's Manual carefully. As with any fine machine, proper care and maintenance are essential for trouble-free operation and optimum performance.

Your authorized Honda dealer will be glad to provide further information or assistance and is fully equipped to handle your future service needs.

Thank you for selecting a Honda. We wish you many miles of continued riding pleasure in the years ahead.

Keep this Owner's Manual in the compartment under the seat.

In this manual statements preceded by the following words are of special significance: "WARNING" means that there is the possibility of personal injury to yourself and others.

"CAUTION" means that there is the possibility of damage to the vehicle.

"NOTE" indicates points of particular interest for more efficient and convenient operation.

We recommend that you take particular notice of these items when reading this manual.

A motorcycle is only as safe as its operator.

The safe rider will spend much time learning to ride and developing his riding skills in an uncongested area before venturing into traffic.

1. In many motorcycle traffic accidents, the automobile driver does not see the motorcyclist in time to avoid an accident. The motorcyclist can make other motorists more aware of his presence by:
 - Wearing brighter, more visible clothing.
 - Using the headlight anytime while riding.
 - Avoiding the "blind spot" of other vehicles and driving defensively.
2. Many motorcycle accidents occur at intersections, parking lot entrances and exits, and driveways. The motorcyclist must show extra caution at these locations.
3. Excessive speed is a factor in many motorcycle accidents. Obey the speed limits and NEVER travel faster than conditions warrant.
4. Many motorcycle accidents involve inexperienced riders. A new motorcyclist should thoroughly familiarize himself with his motorcycle before attempting to ride on public roads. NEVER lend your motorcycle to an inexperienced rider.
5. Most motorcycle accident fatalities are due to head injuries. The motorcyclist should ALWAYS wear a helmet. He should also wear other protective apparel including eye protection, boots, gloves, and heavy clothing.

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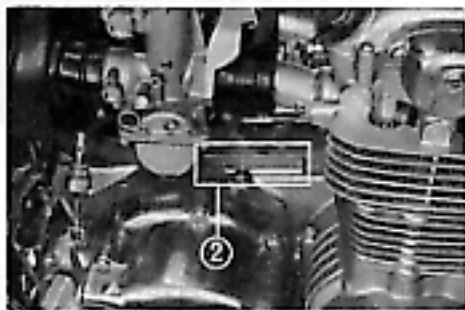


SERIAL NUMBER LOCATION

The frame serial number (1) is stamped on the left side of the steering head. The engine serial number (2) is stamped on top of the left side of the crankcase. These serial numbers are required when registering the motorcycle.



(1) Frame serial number

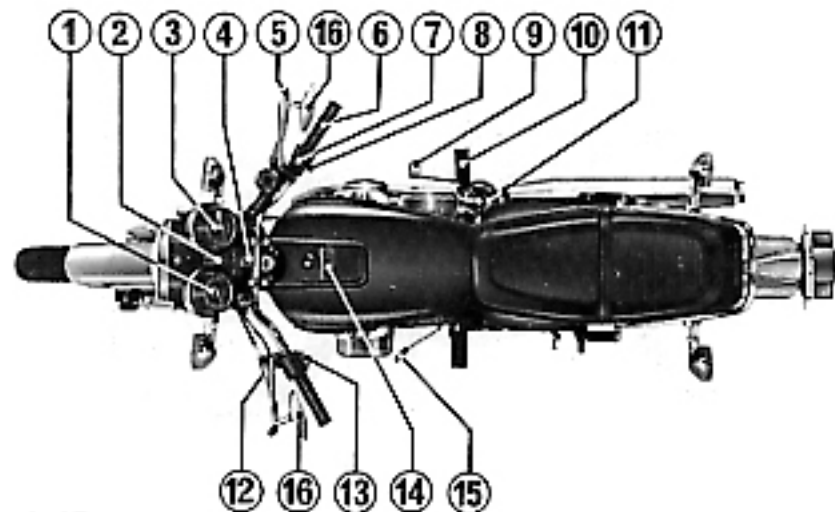


(2) Engine serial number

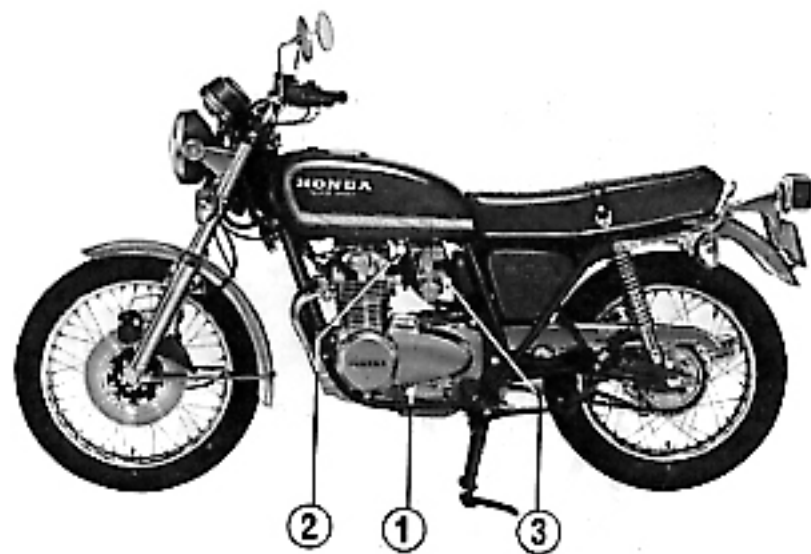
Refer to frame and engine serial numbers when ordering replacement parts to ensure that you will obtain the correct parts for your model series.

CONTROL LOCATION

- (1) Speedometer
- (2) Indicator panel
- (3) Tachometer
- (4) Ignition switch
- (5) Front brake lever
- (6) Throttle grip
- (7) Engine stop switch
- (8) Starter button
- (9) Rear brake pedal
- (10) Foot pegs
- (11) Kick starter pedal
- (12) Clutch lever
- (13) Turn signal switch (above)
Headlight dimmer switch (below)
Horn button (below)
- (14) Fuel filler door
- (15) Gear change pedal
- (16) Right rear view mirror (STD.)
Left rear view mirror (STD.)



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(1) Gear change pedal (2) Fuel valve (3) Choke lever

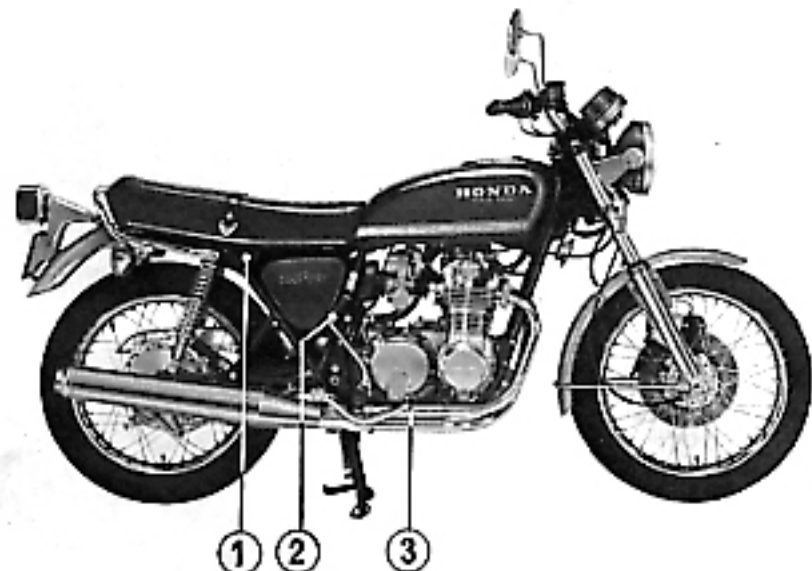
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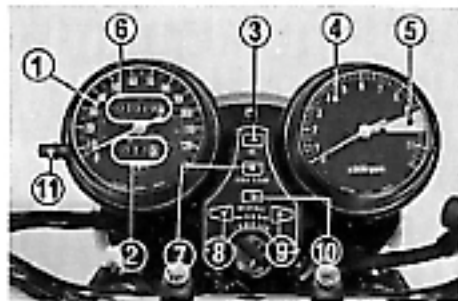
(1) Seat lock (2) Kick starter pedal (3) Rear brake pedal

OPERATING INSTRUCTIONS

Instruments and Indicator Lights

The instruments are grouped together and mounted above the headlight case. The indicator lights are located between the instruments.

Their functions are shown in the table on the next pages.



- (1) Speedometer
- (2) Tripmeter
- (3) Oil pressure warning light
- (4) Tachometer
- (5) Tachometer red zone
- (6) Odometer
- (7) High beam indicator light
- (8) Left turn signal indicator light
- (9) Right turn signal indicator light
- (10) Neutral indicator light
- (11) Tripmeter reset knob

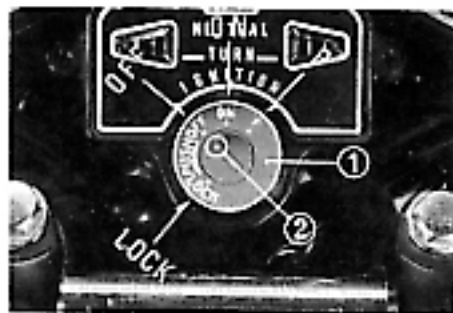
Ref. No.	Description	Function
1	Speedometer	Indicates driving speed.
2	Tripmeter	Indicates distance traveled per trip. (Meter can be reset for each trip)
3	Oil pressure warning light (red)	After turning on the ignition switch but before starting engine, check to make sure the oil pressure warning light is functioning (light comes on). The oil pressure warning light goes off when the engine is started and the prescribed engine oil pressure reached. Should the light come on while driving, it is an indication of a malfunction in the lubricating system, in which case, the motorcycle must be stopped at once, the engine turned off, and the engine oil level checked. If the check reveals that the engine oil level is within the prescribed limits, the cause of the malfunction will have to be determined and corrected by contacting the nearest HONDA dealer. However, an occasional flickering of the warning light at or near idling speeds when the engine is at operating temperature, is of no concern since low oil pressure is normal at low-speed.

Ref. No.	Description	Function
4	Tachometer	Indicates engine rpm.
5	Tachometer red zone	During acceleration, engine RPM indicator needle may be allowed to briefly enter the red zone. However, the motorcycle must not be operated in the red zone for any length of time and must NEVER be operated beyond it.
6	Odometer	Indicates total accumulated distance traveled.
7	High beam indicator light (blue)	Light will be on when headlight is on high beam.
8	Left turn signal indicator light (amber)	Left light will flash when left turn signal light is operating.
9	Right turn signal indicator light (amber)	Right light will flash when right turn signal light is operating.
10	Neutral indicator light (green)	Light will be on when the transmission is in neutral
11	Tripmeter reset knob	Reset the tripmeter to zero (0) by turning the tripmeter reset knob in the direction of the arrow.

Ignition Switch

The ignition switch (1) is located directly below the indicator panel.

Functions of the respective switch positions are shown in the chart below.



(1) Ignition switch
(2) Index mark

Switch Position	Function	Key Removal
OFF	All electric circuits are open, engine cannot be started.	Key can be removed.
ON	Electric circuits are closed, headlight, taillight, running lights and meter lights will be on and other lights can operate, and engine can be started.	Key cannot be removed.
P (PARKING)	The taillight will be on but all other circuits are open. The key should be removed when parking the motorcycle.	Key can be removed.
LOCK (STEERING LOCK)	The steering can be locked. All electric circuits are open, engine cannot be started. Refer to the section "STEERING LOCK" for operation (page 16.)	Key can be removed.



Engine Stop Switch

The three position engine stop switch (1) is located on top of the right handlebar grip switch housing. In the "RUN" position the ignition circuit will be completed and the engine will operate. In the "OFF" positions the ignition circuit will be open and the engine will not operate. This switch is intended primarily as a safety or emergency switch and should normally remain in the "RUN" position.

NOTE:

If your motorcycle is stopped with the ignition switch on and the engine stop switch off, the headlight and taillight will still be on, resulting in battery discharge.

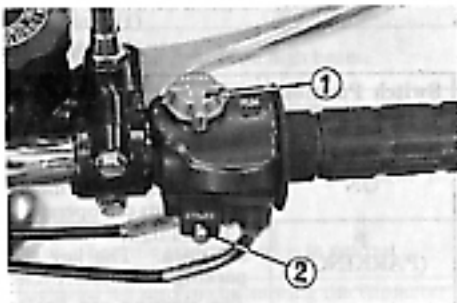
Starter Button

The starter button (2) is located directly below the engine stop switch (1).

When the starter button is pressed the starter motor will crank the engine.

As long as the starter button is pressed for cranking the engine, the headlight will automatically go out, but the taillight stays on.

Refer to pages 24-26 for the correct starting procedure.

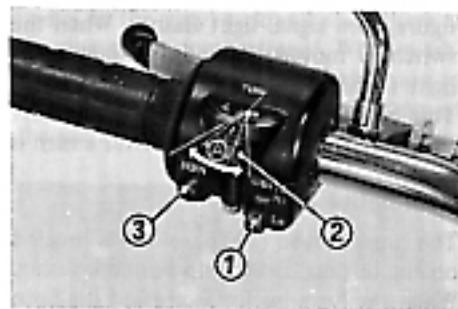


(1) Engine stop switch (2) Starter button

Headlight Dimmer Switch

The headlight dimmer switch (1) is located on the left handlebar grip switch housing.

When the headlight dimmer switch is moved to the "Hi" position, the high beam is on. When the headlight dimmer switch is moved to the "Lo" position, the low beam is on.



(1) Headlight dimmer switch
(2) Turn signal switch
(3) Horn button

Turn Signal Switch

The turn signal switch (2) (page 15) is located on the left handlebar grip switch housing. It can be operated without taking the hand off the handle grip. To signal a left turn move the switch to the "L" position. To signal a right turn move the switch to the "R" position. When the switch is moved within range (A) in figure, turn signal light flashes. When the switch is moved beyond the range, the light flashes and warning buzzer sounds. This buzzer is provided to tell the rider that the light is still flashing after a turn is made.

Horn Button

The horn button (3) (page 15) is located on the left handlebar grip switch housing. When the horn button is pressed the horn will sound.

- (1) Ignition switch
(A) Push in (B) Turn off

Steering Lock

The steering is locked when the ignition switch (1) is in "LOCK" position and the key is removed.

Turn the handlebar all the way to the steering stop, either left or right. With the key at the "OFF" position, turn it counterclockwise to "LOCK" position while pushing in and remove the key. This locks the steering to help prevent theft. To unlock, turn the key clockwise.

WARNING:

Do not attempt to turn the key to the "LOCK" position while the motorcycle is in motion.



Seat Lock and Helmet Holder

The seat lock (1) is located on the lower right side of the seat. Insert the ignition switch key and turn it counterclockwise 90° to unlock and open the seat.

The helmet holders (2) are located under the seat. Open the seat, hang the helmet "D" ring on a hook and lock the seat.

WARNING:

- The seat is a double lock type. Make sure that the seat is locked by pushing it down.
- The helmet holder is designed for helmet security while parking. Do not



(1) Seat lock (2) Helmet holders

operate the motorcycle with a helmet attached to the holder as the helmet may interfere with the rear wheel causing damage to the helmet and possible stoppage of the wheel.

Document Compartment

The document compartment (1) is located under the seat.

Put this owner's manual and other documents in the vinyl sack and place them in the document compartment. When washing your motorcycle, be careful not to direct a stream of water at the bottom of the seat.



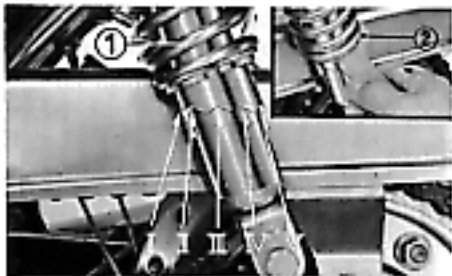
(1) Document compartment

Rear Shock Absorbers

Each rear shock absorber (1) has five adjustment positions for different types of road or riding conditions.

Position I is the standard setting.

Position I is for light loads and smooth road conditions. Positions II to V progressively increase spring tension for a stiffer rear suspension, and are used when the motorcycle is more heavily laden or operated on rough roads.



(1) Rear shock absorber
(2) Fin sparker

FUEL AND OIL

Fuel Valve

The fuel valve (1) is mounted under the left side of the fuel tank.

"OFF" position:

When the fuel valve is turned to the "OFF" position, fuel cannot flow from the fuel tank to the carburetors. Set the valve in this position whenever the motorcycle is not in use.



(1) Fuel valve

The word the arrow points to on the lever indicates the actual position.

"ON" position:

When the fuel valve is turned to the "ON" position, fuel will flow from the main fuel supply to the carburetors.

Set the valve in this position when the engine is to be operated from the main fuel supply.

"RES" position:

When the fuel valve is turned to the "RES" position, fuel will flow from the reserve fuel supply to the carburetor.

The fuel valve should be set in this position only after the main fuel supply has been consumed. The reserve fuel supply is approximately 1.0 U.S. gal. (4.0ℓ).

Switching to the reserve fuel supply serves as a warning to the rider that it is time to refill the fuel tank.

NOTE: Do not operate the machine with the fuel valve in the reserve position after refueling, or you will defeat the purpose of the reserve fuel supply.

Fuel Tank

Fuel tank capacity is 4.2 U.S. gal. (16ℓ) including 1.0 U.S. gal. (4ℓ) in the reserve supply. To open the filler cap (2), open the filler door (1) with the ignition switch key and then turn the cap counter-clockwise. After refueling the tank, position in place and turn the filler cap (2) clockwise until it stops. Then turn the filler cap handle flat and slam the filler door (1) until it clicks.



(1) Fuel filler door (2) Fuel filler cap

Use low-lead or regular gasoline with a Research Octane number of 91 or higher or a Pump Octane number of 86 or higher.

NOTE:

- * Pump Octane is the octane formula specified by the Cost of Living Council.

When refueling take care to exclude dirt, water, or other contaminants from the fuel tank.

WARNING:

- * Gasoline is extremely flammable and is explosive under certain conditions. Refuel in a well ventilated area with the engine stopped. Do not smoke or allow open flames or sparks in the area where the motorcycle is refueled or where gasoline is stored.
- * Do not overfill the tank (there should be no fuel in the filler neck). After refueling, make sure the filler cap is closed securely and the filler door is

locked.

- * Gasoline is harmful or FATAL if swallowed. Avoid repeated or prolonged contact with skin or breathing of vapor. If gasoline is swallowed, do not induce vomiting. Call a physician immediately. **KEEP OUT OF REACH OF CHILDREN.**
- * If the filler cap is replaced, use only a genuine Honda replacement part or its equivalent. Failure to use the proper part may cause a serious malfunction.

Engine Oil Recommendation

USE HONDA 4-STROKE OIL OR EQUIVALENT.

Use only high detergent, premium quality motor oil certified to meet or exceed US automobile manufacturer's requirements for Service Classification SE.

Motor oils intended for Service SE will show this designation on the container.

The regular use of special oil additives is unnecessary and will only increase operating expenses.

Engine oil should be changed at the intervals prescribed in the Maintenance Schedule on page 35.

CAUTION:

Engine oil is a major factor affecting the performance and service life of the engine. Non-detergent and low quality oils are specifically not recommended.

Viscosity:

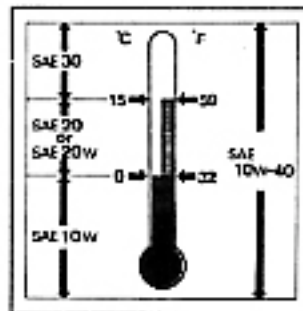
Viscosity selection should be based on the average atmospheric temperature in your riding area. Change to the proper viscosity oil whenever the changes in average atmospheric temperature require it.

Recommended oil viscosity:

General, all temperatures

SAE 10W-40

Alternate:



PRE-RIDING INSPECTION

WARNING:

Take care not to let water enter the muffler or the brake system when washing the motorcycle. Water in the muffler may cause poor starting and wet brakes may reduce brake efficiency.

Prior to starting your motorcycle, perform a general inspection as a matter of habit to make sure that the motorcycle is in good, safe riding condition. This inspection will only require a few minutes and can save you much time and expense in the long run.

Check the following items and if adjustment or servicing is necessary, refer to the appropriate section in the manual.

1. Engine oil level—add engine oil if the level is below the lower mark on the dipstick (page 38).
2. Fuel level—fill fuel tank when necessary (pages 19–20).

3. Front and rear brakes — check fluid level. Adjust free play if incorrect (pages 62–68).
4. Tires — adjust to correct pressure and check tire damage (page 23).
5. Drive chain—check condition of drive chain and measure chain tension. Adjust drive chain if chain tension is incorrect. Lubricate the drive chain if it appears dry. Replace the drive chain if it is badly worn or damaged (pages 58–61).
6. Throttle operation—check throttle operation in all steering positions. Adjust if free play is incorrect. Replace or correct cable routing if throttle does not operate freely in all steering positions (pages 53–54).
7. Battery electrolyte — Check electrolyte level and add distilled water if necessary (pages 77–80).
8. Turn signal lights, tail/stoplight and headlight—replace blown bulbs (pages 83–86).

TIRE RECOMMENDATION

Correct air pressure will provide maximum safety, stability, riding comfort and tire life.

Be sure to follow the tire specification.

Cold tire pressures psi (kg/cm ²)	Up to 200 lb (90 kg) load	Front: 25 (1.75) Rear: 28 (2.0)
	Up to vehicle capacity load	Front: 28 (2.0) Rear: 36 (2.5)
Vehicle capacity load limit	330 lbs (150 kg)	
Tire size	Front: 3.25S19 Rear: 3.75S18	
Tire brand	Front: S21F2 (Bridgestone) Rear: S21R2 (Bridgestone)	

WARNING:

- * Improper tire inflation will cause abnormal tread wear or other damage and create a safety hazard. Riding with

underinflated tires will cause the tires to slip on the rims damaging the inner tube valves. Severe underinflation may result in loss of the tire from the rim.

- * Check tire pressures frequently and adjust if necessary.
- * It is recommended that the tires be replaced when the tread depth at the center of the tire is less than the following limit.

Minimum recommend tire center tread depth
Front: 0.06in. (1.5 mm) Rear: 0.08in. (2.0 mm)

- * Operation with excessively worn tires is very hazardous and will adversely affect traction, steering and handling.

STARTING THE ENGINE

NOTE:

The electrical system of the CB550F is designed to prevent electric starting if the transmission is in gear, unless the clutch is disengaged. However, it is recommended that the transmission be placed in neutral before attempting to start the engine.

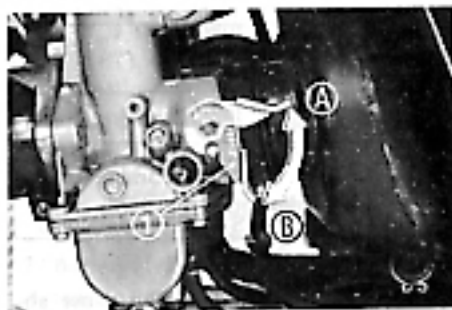
Cold Engine Starting Procedure

1. Turn the fuel valve to the "ON" position (page 19).
2. Insert the key into the ignition switch and turn to the "ON" position. At this time, observe the green neutral indicator light (page 12). The light will be on when the transmission is in the neutral position.

Also at this time the red oil pressure warning light should be on. If the light fails to come on, the connection should be checked for an open circuit

and the bulb checked and replaced if burned out.

3. Make sure that the engine stop switch (page 14) is in the "RUN" position.
4. Raise the choke lever to the fully closed position (A).



(1) Choke lever

5. Open the throttle slightly and press the starter button. If the engine does not start within 5 seconds, release the starter button and allow the starting motor to rest for approximately 10 seconds before pressing the starter button again. If the engine does not start readily with the starting motor, use the kick starter pedal to start the engine.



(1) Right foot rest

WARNING:

- When using the kick starter, retract the right foot rest. After starting the engine, always return it to the extended (riding) position.

CAUTION:

Do not allow the kick starter to snap back freely against the pedal stop as engine case damage could result.

If the engine fails to start after several repeated attempts, it may have become flooded with excess fuel. To clear the engine, turn off the ignition switch and lower the choke lever to the fully open position (B), open the throttle and crank the engine using the kick starter pedal. Turn the ignition switch to the "ON" position and follow the starting procedure outlined in steps 1 through 5; however, at this time use of the choke is not necessary.



6. After the engine starts, operate at approximately 2,000 rpm until the engine responds to the throttle when the choke is open.

CAUTION:

The oil pressure warning lamp should go off within a few seconds after the engine is started. If the lamp remains lighted, turn off the engine immediately. Check and correct the oil level if necessary. If the oil level is adequate, do not operate the motorcycle until the lubrication system has been examined by a qualified mechanic.

Starting in Extremely Cold Weather

Prime the engine before starting by cranking several times with the kick starter pedal. The ignition switch or engine stop switch should be turned "OFF".

The choke should be fully closed and the throttle opened. Then, follow the procedure for starting a cold engine.

Warm Engine Starting Procedure

When the engine is to be re-started while it is still warm, follow the cold engine starting procedure; however, the use of the choke is not necessary.

WARNING:

Exhaust contains poisonous carbon monoxide gas. Avoid inhalation of exhaust gases. Never run the engine in a closed garage or confined area.

BREAK-IN PROCEDURE

A careful break-in procedure during the initial mileage will measurably extend the service life of the engine. During this crucial period the motorcycle must not be driven at full power over extended distances nor should it be driven too slowly. The general rules are as follows:

1. Maximum continuous engine speed during the first 600 miles (1,000 km) must not exceed 5,000 rpm (60% speed in the respective gears).
2. Increase the maximum continuous engine speed by 2,000 rpm between odometer readings of 600 miles (1,000 km) and 1,000 miles (1,600 km). Drive briskly, vary speeds frequently and use full throttle for short spurts only. Do not exceed 7,000 rpm.
3. Bear in mind never to lug the engine with heavy throttle at low engine

speeds. This rule is applicable not only during break-in but at all times.

4. Upon reaching an odometer reading of 1,000 miles (1,600 km), you can subject the motorcycle to full throttle operation; however, do not exceed 9,300 rpm at any time (observe RED ZONE limit on tachometer).

CAUTION:

Do not exceed 7,000 rpm when running the engine without load.

