

Technical Update Foam Air Filter Cleaning "Bio Oils"

Air Filter Cleaning Pro Honda biodegradable air filter oil

Air filter maintenance is an important part of general maintenance for your Motorcycle or ATV. A clean air filter allows the engine to get air to run properly. The foam type air filter element is a cleanable unit that is typically located under the seat on an ATV. (Consult your owner's manual for the exact location and removal instructions.)

Cleaning an air filter element is one of the least enjoyable service functions, however using Pro Honda biodegradable air filter makes this job much easier and better for the environment.

Once an air filter has been serviced with the Pro Honda air filter oil, cleanup is done with soap and water, not combustible solvents.

1. Remove

The first steps for servicing your air filter is to remove it from the vehicle, then carefully remove the foam element from the support housing.



2. Wash

You will need to completely wash out the petroleum based oil that is on the filter, as the bio based oil and petroleum products are not mixable. To do this, use a high flash solvent such as kerosene or diesel fuel. Never use Gasoline as a solvent, as it is very dangerous and can harm the foam filter element.

It is a good practice to wash the filter from the inside out. This loosens all of the debris that's in the filter and coated to the outside. I wash a filter element for about five minutes, and I never wring the filter. I squeeze it and rinse out all of the filter oil and dirt.



When you have cleaned the filter in solvent use paper towels to blot dry the foam. Then wash the solvent residues from the foam element with warm water and a good detergent such as Hondabrite®, Simple Green, dish soap or other household cleaner. Be sure to rinse all of the soap suds out of the element.

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3. Dry

Dry the filter by allowing it to air dry or by drying it with paper towels. To speed up the drying process I place a few paper towels inside of the filter and around the outside and press the filter flat. This pushes the water out of the foam and into the paper towels.



4. Inspect

Next inspect the filter for wear and check all of the seams. If the filter has any tears or worn spots it needs to be replaced.



5. Apply Oil

When the filter is completely dry, apply Pro Honda air filter oil to the filter. Apply the filter oil to the inside of the filter and squeeze it through

the foam. Be sure to use enough oil to fully coat the foam, and squeeze out the excess. I blot off the excess with a paper towel and squeeze the filter element gently for several minutes to insure an even coating.



A good way to oil filters is to put the filter in a zip lock bag and do the massaging in the bag. This is less messy and also allows you to oil several filters while conserving oil. Wearing latex gloves and working in a well ventilated area is recommended.

Next, clean the air filter support housing and install the element onto the housing. Use Pro Honda air filter sealing grease on the edges of the filter element to insure a good seal. The filter is ready to be reinstalled. It is a good idea to allow the filter to sit for a few minutes to allow the carrier solvent to evaporate and check for even oil coverage.

The next time your filter needs to be cleaned it will be a much easier job to do as the Pro Honda air filter service kit comes with a specialized cleaner.
(Photo of Air Filter Cleaning Kit)

Simply remove the filter as before, mix up the Pro Honda air filter cleaner in hot water and place the air filter element in the solution and wash and rinse the dirt from the filter. This is a very simple way to clean your air filter.

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Next inspect the air box rubber manifold boots and reinstall the filter.

Service Department Tips

Pro Honda Air Filter oil is a good product to utilize as this bio-based product can be cleaned up with water based cleaners. This is a cost savings for your service department as air filter cleaning is not done in the parts washing tank where critical engine parts are cleaned. Keeping mud out of your wash tank will prolong the life of the solvent as well as the circulation pump and solvent filter. Also, since many parts that need cleaning are just dirty, a water based solvent and wash tank may be a cost savings to your service department.



Cleaning the air filter element in water is easier on the foam and the filter will last longer. (Tip: If you run out of the special Honda air filter cleaner do not use solvent, try various laundry detergents and hot water.)

The next step is to clean the air box. This is very important as the dirt in the air box can be dislodged and can get into the intake tract when the filter is being reinstalled. Carefully wipe the inside of the air box out with a paper towel, and inspect the bottom of the air box and clean the vent. If the air box has lots of dirt in it carefully put a clean shop towel in the air boot intake and wash the air box with Hondabrite, and use a wet & dry vacuum to fully clean the air box.



For Air Filters serviced with Pro Honda Biodegradable Air Filter oil it is suggested to have a mixed container of Pro Honda air filter cleaner to do the initial filter cleaning. This will remove the majority of the exterior dirt and filter oil, next wash the air filter element in the water based solvent tank, this will remove the fine dirt, then do a final wash & rinse with soap and clean water and re-oil the filter element. Fast, easy & less disposal.

Other water based cleaners can remove the oil and dirt. If they are used be sure that they are compatible with the foam filters. Some green / high Ph cleaners contain chemistry that is damaging to filter foam and the glue that they are bonded together with. Check compatibility first.



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In the Honda Rider's Club of America / Chemhelp service center over 6,000 air filters per year are cleaned. We utilize a Simple Green® heated solvent tank and industrial water based solution for most of our general cleaning. This may be a good option to consider.

Tips: Always wear rubber gloves or latex gloves when you are working with solvents and oils. Many products are harmful, and gloves will protect you from cuts on sharp surfaces and make handling the air filter easier and less messy. For even oil application I use a snip top cap from a similar bottle. This allows even oil application.



Air filter de lamination can be caused by strong cleaners and solvents attacking the glued seams. Always check the filter for damage. Foam filters do wear out!

If the filter has expanded and is loose on the basket housing, replace it!

Gasoline and alcohol often expands the foam filters. This increases the size of particle that can pass through the foam.

Some evaporating solvents in filter oils are very combustible. Always allow the filter to air dry prior to starting the engine. Running a spark suppressor screen is a good practice.



Water and spray cleaner pre rinsing a filter extends the life of the filter washing solution. This also makes cleaning the filters easier and faster. Always clear rinse the filter thoroughly after cleaning. This removes the cleaner and any grit that that is trapped in the cells.

Chris Real, Certified Lubrication Specialist and host of the HRCA – Chemhelp Environmental Protection Service Center.

Visit the HRCA Chemhelp service center at the Rocky Mountain ATV Jamboree in Richfield Utah and at other major events including the Nevada 200
Barstow to Vegas Dualsport
Sierra Safari
Loretta Lynn's MX Championships
Glen Helen 24 Hour
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And other events. Visit www.chemhelp.com for information.