

BRAKE SYSTEM CHECK

Here is the one simplified air brake check that anybody can use. It isn't necessary to do this check every day, but at least once a week it should be done...

1. Start the engine. Let the air pressure build up until the governor activates the air compressor cut-out (the psshtttt-sound you hear when the pressure reaches 120-130 psi on the gauge). Press the brake pedal several times until you see the needle drop to around 85-90 psi. At that point the governor should activate the air compressor cut-in and the pressure should start building back up to 120-130 psi. (This tells you that the governor is working properly and the cut-out and cut-in function is operational.)

2. Shut off the engine, but leave the ignition in the "on" position. Release the parking brake-be sure to be on level ground! Watch the gauge for one minute. There shouldn't be more than a 2 psi drop in pressure. (This checks for leaks from the air compressor to the tanks and the one-way check valves.)

3. With the engine still off and the ignition in the "on" position, press the service brake (brake pedal) and hold it down for one minute. There should be no more than 3 psi drop in pressure. (This checks for leaks with the system under pressure: the air lines, one-way check valves and diaphragms.)

4. Turn the engine back on and let the compressor build pressure to where the governor activates the air compressor cut-out. Then turn the engine off and the ignition switch on. Gently pump the service brakes (do not pump rapidly) until the low air warning light and buzzer activates. Devices must activate at not less than 60 psi. (This checks the low air warning devices.)

5. With the engine off and the ignition switch in the "on" position and emergency/parking brake off, gently pump the service brake (brake pedal) until the emergency brake applies automatically. Application should occur between 20-45 psi. After application, continue to pump the brake pedal until the air supply is depleted. Start the engine, place in appropriate gear (if your system

will allow you to- some won't allow you to put into any gear but neutral), press and hold the emergency brake button in the release position. If you can, apply your accelerator but not over 1000 RPM. (This checks to insure that the emergency brake is functioning properly. You shouldn't be able to move the vehicle at all!)

6. Start the engine and let the pressure build back up to where you can hear the air compressor cut-out (psshttt). Set the parking brake. Put the vehicle into a forward gear and apply the accelerator, but not over 1000 RPM. You shouldn't be able to move the vehicle. (This checks to ensure that the emergency brake is working properly when activated.)

7. Before pulling out into traffic, make at least two stops before leaving your parking site. Be sure the coach doesn't pull to the left or right during brake application. To double check your emergency brake, accelerate to no more than 5 MPH and stop the coach by applying the emergency brake. (This is a double check of your parking brake.)

There it is...it's not difficult, but it's required for commercial drivers. It's a good way for you to become confident in your vehicle and competent in your air brake system.

This article was submitted to us by one of our diesel pusher owners.