

**BRAKE PROBLEMS:** This may serve as a guide to solving the most common brake problems.

Pedal slowly goes to the floor at a stop: If the master cylinder is not low then the problem is a bad master cylinder. The fluid is bypassing the internal seals. Also check for brake fluid leakage at the master cylinder boot and on the floor under the carpet below the steering column. A sudden pedal drop without fluid loss can also be a master cylinder but it is not very common.

Continuously low master cylinder: Fluid is leaking somewhere and a COMPLETE visual inspection of the system is necessary. Replace badly rusted lines

Pedal pulsation: Out of round drums. Drums are iron and will distort when dropped on concrete. They can also warp if very hot and you pull the parking brake on extremely tight.

Car pulsates (surges) but the pedal does not: Rusted spots on drums from storage. Sandpaper usually works but a light turn is best. Sometimes simply driving a while will cure mild cases.

Spongy pedal feel: Air in the system is the most common but it can be improperly stamped shoes.

Very low pedal all the time which does not pump up: Improper push rod adjustment or a bad dual master cylinder. Do not adjust the push rod unless you are positive – it can lock up hot brakes.

Excessive effort required: Frozen wheel cylinder pistons from storage (more common on early models), or badly rusted drums. Also new shoes fitted to drums turned greatly oversize, which gives a very small initial contact area or the wrong (too heavy) return springs were installed. Almost all shoes now manufactured take more pedal effort due to the material that has replaced asbestos.

Low pedal which will pump up: Brakes are out of adjustment. The 60-62 models have to be manually adjusted and the later self adjusters can freeze up or wear out.

Brakes pull or grab on one side: A long list - leaking wheel cylinder, one frozen wheel cylinder, worn out shoes, weak brake springs, broken brake springs, rear parking brake cable beginning to freeze up, grease from over packed wheel bearings on the shoes, miss matched shoe sets, loose wheel bearings, low tire, miss matched tires, out of alignment, bad suspension parts or bad steering components, unequal adjustment. Some of the cheap relined shoes will pull when new.

All brakes drag or lock up: incorrect pushrod adjustment applies the brakes as fluid heats up from use. Rarely the master cylinder can cause this due to dirt – fluid cannot return properly.

All brake components are available so there is no reason to drive with bad or poor brakes. At the very least perform the “stomp test” in your driveway twice a year. It is difficult to see the area above the gas tank or above transaxles where rusted lines lurk. Brake hoses are now beginning to show their age as many cars have the originals. Go through your brake system completely and enjoy piece of mind!