



SAFETY TRAINING TOPIC

Air Brake Safety and Compliance

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Brakes are a critical part of any vehicle regardless of size.

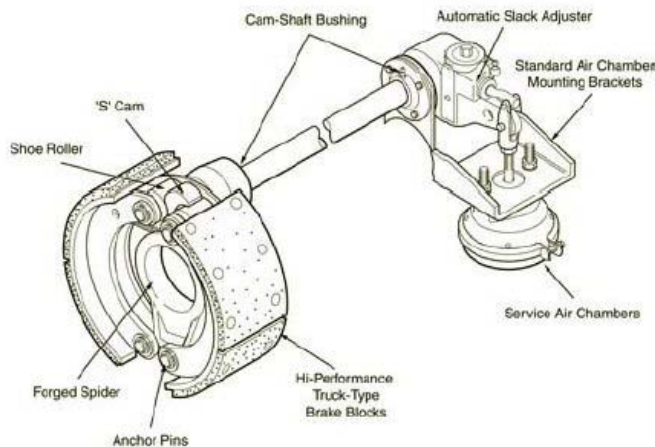
The brakes and the systems that support your brakes and the ability to stop become even more critical on an 80,000 pound tractor-trailer. Air is the engagement method for most modern trucks. The Air Brake system involves many components that must be in proper condition and repair for the vehicle to stop safely.

Brakes must be checked BEFORE (Pre-trip) AND AFTER (DVIR) EACH TRIP. Visually check for lining thickness, cracks in shoes or drums, loose or missing parts, cracked or leaking air lines, and overall condition of parts that are visible. Buy a flashlight and bend down and LOOK!

Brakes take considerable stress and strain each time the vehicle is stopped. Panic stops should be kept to a minimum by practicing defensive driving and maintaining good following distance.

Brakes should be checked for proper adjustment at least once each week. This can be done by CAREFULLY releasing one set of brakes at a time (in other words, keep the tractor brakes set and release the trailer brakes) and checking the clearance gap between the shoes and the drums.

If you can see a gap the brakes are likely out of adjustment and should be taken to a certified shop



for proper adjustment. Modern Auto-Slack brakes do not adjust in the same way old style brakes did. Adjusting an Auto-Slack brake in the same manner as a manual slack adjuster can result in internal damage and produce NO BRAKES when needed.

If you own and drive your own truck you will most likely do at least

some of your own maintenance, which could include adjusting brakes. To be in compliance with Federal Motor Carrier Safety Regulations you must complete a "Certification of Brake Inspector" form to be able to adjust and repair air brakes even on your own truck. See your Safety Department to obtain these documents and complete the forms.

The primary motivation to having good brakes is of course being able to stop and keep you safe, as well as keeping the families we share the road with safe.

Another big advantage is to be able to pass a DOT inspection with "No Violations". Brakes are one of the items most often cited during a roadside inspection. You can count on most inspectors checking your brakes when you are pulled for ANY level of inspection.

Remember, Check your brakes daily, be certain they are properly adjusted, and report any defects.