

# SPANNERMAN ANSWERS YOUR QUESTIONS

## BRAKE FAILURE

I have had problems with my 1994 American motorhome, having lost the brakes three times in very dangerous situations, and twice I had to rely on my trailer brakes to stop me. It appears to me that my brake fluid must be overheating.

Can you point me in the right direction to resolve this problem. I would like to fix this problem before towing my large 4x4 for any distance.

*I think you may have given me a clue when you mentioned the trailer. The brakes on the motorhome don't have enough capacity to stop a heavy trailer. If you are towing a larger trailer, make sure that its brakes work and are adjusted properly and that the brake controller is working properly. If you tow a car, consider adding an auxiliary brake-activation system to it. Also, when RV brake fluid gets old, the temperature at which it boils is lower. When the fluid boils in the calipers or lines, it can cause complete brake failure. I would suggest you flush the brake system and upgrade the fluid.*

## DAMAGED PLUG LEADS

I recently replaced the spark-plug wiring on my motorhome, which has a big-block 454-cid engine. I installed new Jacobs Ceramic 2000 wiring and also replaced original GM wire conduit with Motormite conduit.

After one trip with the rig, I needed to check my front suspension so I slid underneath the motorhome and was absolutely horrified at what I saw. Nothing wrong with the suspension but the conduit material surrounding the plug wires had melted and appeared more like shrink wrap. None of the leads or the conduit material were nearer than 4 inches to the exhaust manifold. I tried to contact the manufacturer to ask for an explanation, but I didn't get a response.

*Motormite claim that this conduit material is a high-quality product that meets or exceeds original-equipment specifications, but they do not claim that it can withstand the extreme temperatures that exhaust manifolds of big-block Chevy engines produce.*

*The conduit material in question is recommended for general electrical wiring purposes associated with devices such as alternators, fog lights, electrical accessories, etc and it would appear that it should not be used in situations where it will in close proximity to hot manifolds*

*I would recommend that you contact West Midlands Vehicles at Cannock, who are GM stockists in the UK, and ask them which product they would recommend for protecting ignition leads in the proximity of exhaust manifolds.*

## WHEELPROBLEMS

We have a 1983 26ft Class C motorhome built by Skyline. It has a Ford chassis with 8.75x16.5 Budd wheels.

In recent months all eight studs broke off and left the right rear duals running out past the bumper well before I could come to a stop.

I have talked with Ford customer assistance, and a number of tyre and wheel dealers and I cannot pin down a torque setting for these wheels. I have received recommendations ranging from 105 foot-pounds to the 220 foot-pounds recommended by Bendix and NTDR charts, I am at a loss as to what torque to use. I no longer feel comfortable driving the motorhome for long distances.

I have all the tools and torque wrenches needed but no specs. These are 9/16 inch studs. Do you know the answer, or could one of your readers help with this problem?

*During the period of time when your coach was built, I learned about some instances where the wrong spare wheel was supplied with the coach, and the identical condition resulted when this wheel was used.*

*Specifically, Ford changed from a cone-type lug nut to an integral two-piece swivelling lug nut. The difference is obvious. As a result, the wheel must match the lug nut. The cone lug nut wheel has a 'V' where the lug nut goes in; the two piece swivelling nut does not. If in doubt, inspect the other wheels to determine whether one is different in the area of holes for the wheel studs. If one is different, specifically the left rear outer wheel, you must obtain the proper wheel.*

*The wheel torque is 140 foot pounds. The torque sequence for the eight-stud wheel is 12 o'clock, 6 o'clock, 3 o'clock, 9 o'clock, 4 o'clock, 11 o'clock, 2 o'clock and 7 o'clock. When the rear wheels are installed, they have a locating stud. The studs must be clean, dry, and free of dirt and paint. Never use oil or grease on the studs or nuts. The rear lug nuts must be retorqued at 100 and 500 miles after a wheel is removed and reinstalled.*

## CHEAP CHEVY CURE

Readers might be interested in the cause of a fault which occurred on my 1989 motorhome powered by a Chevy 454 which spitted and backfired whenever I accelerated. This was due to a faulty oil pressure sending unit causing a fault in the choke system which made me think I had fuel-system problems. The CHOKE light on the dash would come on, then the trouble would begin. The circuit from the oil-sending unit that goes to the relay and then the electric choke was bad. This caused all of the headaches

## TECHNICAL QUESTIONS

If you have a technical question that you would like answering please send it to: SPANNERMAN, ARVM, MONTROSE, CROWN HILL, GREAT DALBY, LE14 2ER. Fax. 01664 481400 Email: abpleisure@btinternet.com

Whilst every care will be taken to ensure the accuracy of answers the Magazine will assume no responsibility for any effect from errors or omissions.

and wasted trips to the RV service centre.

## FORD FUELMILEAGE

I drive a 35ft 1998 motorhome, which has a Ford 7.5 litre engine with an E40D transmission that has about 10,000 miles on it. It has a tag axle and averages about 10mpg. Other motorhome owners with the same engine claim to average 15mpg or better. The best I have ever achieved is 13mpg.

I added a Banks PowerPack, Banks Trans Command and Bosch platinum plugs, which improved my mileage, but it is still not up to what I think it should be. I try to drive at a speed on the motorways that obviates having to make continual lane changes, so I do not believe I push the coach that hard.

*There are many variables, it's difficult to say what a certain vehicle's fuel consumption should be. However 10mpg does seem too low unless you drive in the mountains most of the time. Coaches with tag axles tend to be very heavy and have more rolling and wind resistance than those without the tags.*

*I suggest you have the engine checked, particularly the timing and fuel mixture throughout the operating range. Running it on a chassis dynamometer is especially helpful in sorting out such concerns.*

## NOISY FUELTANK

We purchased a brand new 30ft American motorhome in 2001 and after a few teething problems it has been almost trouble-free except for a noisy fuel tank.

We have heard, particularly in warm weather, a loud booming noise coming from the fuel tank. Obviously this has concerned us greatly as we do not know what is causing it. Should we be concerned and how can we stop it.

*Many motorhome owners have reported that they have heard a tremendous boom coming from their fuel tank several times a day. I experienced the same problem with my petrol tank expanding and contracting. Then it was suggested that I should check the fuel cap to make sure that it was venting properly. I found that it wasn't venting so I replaced it and have not had the problem since. Fuel tanks should always be vented, either via the cap or by other means.*

*Another problem created if the tank is not vented can be failure of the fuel pump to deliver enough fuel due to a lack of air coming into the tanks. It's possible to overwork the fuel pump and possibly collapse the tank. In any event, after driving some miles without a vent, there will be less fuel delivered to the engine, and the results are fairly predictable.*