



BRAKE ADJUSTMENT AND SLACK ADJUSTER INSTALLATION

Brake adjustment after a friction reline is a very important procedure. It must be done to insure that the right amount of slack adjuster movement, or stroke, is accomplished to meet specifications. It also will determine the amount of braking that will be available for the vehicle. The old standard of tighten it down and back it off 1/4 turn will do for an initial adjustment, but there is more to do.

Drum-to-lining clearance and stroke are the final determining factors when it comes down to insuring that the brakes are within specifications to give you the best stopping power. However, if the slack adjusters are not installed correctly when first installed or re-installed, all adjustments will be much more difficult to maintain and get desired clearances.

Before slack adjuster installation you must consider the pushrod length and insure that it is exactly what the manufacturer recommendation for your vehicle requires. Pushrod length is usually measured and duplicated on the newly installed chambers. Before this can be done, the old pushrod must be measured, the new pushrod marked, and then cut to the exact length. It has been general practice to apply pressure to the chamber and measure the rod. This type of practice can, and will, cause problems with brake adjustment.

A spring brake chamber must be fully collapsed, or caged, before the measurement will be correct. Many brake installers merely pressurize the chamber and measure the length. When this is done, the length may appear to be OK. Using the spring brake chamber caging bolt, the chamber should be caged completely, and the chamber pushrod measured. When measuring the new brake chamber, the same must be done to insure that when the measurement is transferred, it is exactly the same as the old pushrod.

After the clevis pin is attached to the pushrod, the slack adjuster can be installed following the manufacturers procedures using the template provided by them. Once the slack adjuster is installed correctly, it is extremely important to **DRIVE THE VEHICLE** so that the brakes can be set. Once the brakes are adjusted and set in this manner, they will never change. If the adjustment changes, the automatic slack adjuster is not functioning properly. Simply adjusting the slack again into specifications just does no good. The minute the vehicle is driven and the brakes are applied, it will go right back to where it was before you adjusted it. The only way to insure that the adjustment will remain the same is to insure that your initial installation and pushrod length are correct to start with.

This is just another step in making sure that you get the most mileage out of your friction material and your vehicle's braking system.