

BRAKE MAINTENANCE

Under normal driving conditions the standard braking system on a Stag is more than adequate. However, experience has shown that a neglected braking system is the cause for poor braking.

Sticking brake caliper pistons, partially seized rear wheel cylinders and old brake fluid being the main problems. It is also worth checking the front brake disc rotors, as the inside face is susceptible to bad corrosion and often only a third of the disc area is actually used. Most common problem is poor and/or uneven performance of the handbrake which actuates on the rear brake shoes.

I hear you say; how can that happen when after all the system is automatically adjusted every time you reverse the car and apply the foot brake?

Simply put, it depends upon the purchase and/or effort applied via the handbrake linkage between the two shoes.

Example:

If I stand against a wall with my right arm against it in the shape of a vee, I can use my arm to move my body away from it. However, if I stand near the wall at arms length already extended, I cannot move any further away from the wall by the use of my arm.

All mechanical brakes rely on close contact and/or good purchase to operate efficiently.

First drop both ends of the handbrake cable from the levers protruding from the rear of the braking plates. The threaded tubes either end of the brake cable should be able to revolve on the cable. Once free, the tube and cable should be lubricated with nickel anti-seize. It's a good idea to remove the cable from the car, clean and re-lubricate it.

Handy Tip:

Tie a length of fishing line onto one end before you remove. That way it will be easier to put back in place.

Handbrake Shoe Linkages (between the 2 shoes)

If everything is in good condition, the lever, where it is attached to the cable behind the backplate, should be **roughly parallel** with the backplate when the hand brake is off and not too much further out even when applied. It may well be at about 45 degrees to the backplate if things are badly worn and can even reach a point where it can travel no further, giving a firm but useless handbrake lever.

I must assume that you already know how to strip and re-assemble your rear brakes, so get them to pieces (one side at a time is not a bad idea just in case you forget).

First, check that the lever has not seized where the two parts are riveted together. If they have, get them freed off, which will probably make them very loose. This does not matter too much, but a sharp blow or three with a decent hammer on the head of the rivet will probably put things right, but don't overtighten it. The critical wear occurs at the point where the end of the lever attached to the cable pivots against the brake shoe, both shoe and lever wearing away. New shoes cure part of the problem,

but the lever will need to be carefully built up with just the right amount of welding, then filed into shape.

I'm afraid I can't give you exact dimensions here, but if you build it up too much you won't get the drum back on, even with the adjuster right back. It's a case of trial and error till the drum fits back and there is just a little movement on the lever to work the brake. A small groove where the lever fits into the hole in the shoe is all that is necessary. Make sure the self adjuster is working and has set itself up before reconnecting the cable.

Once the rear brakes (shoes to drum contact) has been correctly established, the next operation is to apply the foot brake. Once released, this will enable you to replace either end of the handbrake cable onto the arms protruding from the brake plates. Adjustment of the clevis pin holders should be required to make them fit.

Next, reverse the car a couple of times and apply the foot brake. This will set the final handbrake clearances between the drum and shoes.

Finally reset the handbrake cable at the arms so that the handbrake lever inside the car holds the car in place on the 5th or 6th click of the ratchet. The brakes should not bind once the lever is released.

This article is a generalisation and does not cover every problem in detail.

Hopefully you may pass the next W.O.F. test!

Cheers,
John Parker