

Bus Brakes



BY JOHN JARRET

Result of Brake Failure

I want to talk about one of the most important systems in your bus, brakes. Most of us forget they are there or that they need maintenance until it's too late. There are basically three types of brakes systems used on buses today. They are hydraulic brakes, air brakes and parking brakes. We will "break" [no pun intended] down the difference here and talk about pros and cons of each. Let's start with the most common brake system in buses.

Hydraulic Brakes

Some may argue that air brakes in school buses are more common. The problem is that air brakes were not used wide spread in school buses until the late to mid 80's.

Most of the time gasoline engines were used in school buses' chassis. These engines produce vacuum so it was more cost effective to use hydraulic brakes that use a vacuum booster to give you the power brakes that most wanted. Diesel engines do not produce a vacuum so it is common for them to use a hydra-boost system that uses the power steering pump to make the power brakes. Hydra-boost can also be used in gasoline engine applications.

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