

ABS BRAKE HUFF TEST ON A PREVOST

I often screw up when answering brake test questions because I forget about the ABS system as being a part of our coaches.

So let me try to atone a little for my errors of omission.

On an ABS equipped coach prior to starting we turn on the key and wait patiently for the CEL and SEL lights to go out when the engine computer completes its self check. When the key is first turned on we can hear a series of clicks. Some of the noises we hear are the relays that engage so the engine will keep running when it starts and the ignition system has all the electrical connections it needs.

But there are other sounds and those sounds will be four clicks as the ABS system does its self check. The sounds are the valves within the ABS system that open when required to prevent a wheel from locking up, and close when there is no imminent wheel lockup.

If we accept those sounds without doing anything further they are just our assurance the valves in the ABS system will work. But in a recent explanation about where a leak could be if the service brakes failed a DOT brake check I forgot completely a potential leak in the system could be in the modulating valve in the ABS system. That valve is what releases braking air pressure if a wheel is starting to lock up.

Other than a DOT brake check we have no way of knowing if a valve is leaking. But we can do what I think is called a "Huff" test to hear the valves opening and closing in sequence, if for no other reason than to hear those valves at work as the system does a self test.

To start, run the engine to bring the air systems up to full pressure with your foot firmly on the brake and turn off the engine. Keep your foot on the pedal and turn the key back on, but do not start the engine.

You will again hear the series of clicks from the relays closing when the coach runs, but now instead of merely a series of clicks from the ABS system self check you are going to hear a puff or huff of air as each ABS system modulating valve opens and closes.

So some time when you are bored, go out and try this test. Just for fun.