

Technical Bulletin

Bulletin No.: PRO-08-22 Effective Date: 1/1/94 Page: 1 of 2

Subject: **Additional Cold Weather Operation Tips For The Air Brake System**

Last year we published Bulletin PRO-08-21 which provided some guidelines for “winterizing” a vehicle air brake system. Here are some additional suggestions for making cold weather vehicle operation just a little more bearable.

Thawing Frozen Air Lines

The old saying; “Prevention is the best medicine” truly applies here! Each year this activity accounts for an untold amount of unnecessary labor and component replacement. Here are some Do’s and Don’ts for prevention and thawing.

Do’s

1. Do maintain freeze prevention devices to prevent road calls. Don’t let evaporators or injectors run out of methanol alcohol or protection will be degraded. Check the air dryer for proper operation and change the desiccant when needed.
2. Do thaw out frozen air lines and valves by placing the vehicle in a warmed building. This is the only method for thawing that will not cause damage to the air system or its components.
3. Do use dummy hose couplings on the tractor and trailer.
4. Do check for sections of air line that could form water traps. Look for “drooping” lines.

Don’ts

1. Do not apply an open flame to air lines and valves. Beyond causing damage to the internal nonmetallic parts of valves and melting or burning non-metallic air lines, **THIS PRACTICE IS UNSAFE AND CAN RESULT IN VEHICLE FIRE!**
2. Do not introduce (pour) fluids into air brake lines or hose couplings (“glad hands”). Some fluids used can cause immediate and severe damage to rubber components. Even methanol alcohol, which is used in Alcohol Evaporators and Injectors, should not be poured into air lines. Fluids poured into the system wash lubricants out of valves, collect in brake chambers and valves and can cause malfunction. Loss of lubricant can affect valve operating characteristics, accelerate wear and cause premature replacement.

3. Do not park a vehicle outside after thawing its air system indoors. Condensation will form in the system and freeze again. Place the vehicle in operation when it is removed to the outdoors.

Supporting Air and Electrical Lines

Make certain tie wraps are replaced and support brackets are re-assembled if removed during routine maintenance. These items prevent the weight of ice and snow accumulations from breaking or disconnecting air lines and wires.

Automatic Drain Valves (System without Air Dryer)

As we stated last year, routine reservoir draining is the most basic step (although not completely effective) in reducing the possibility of freeze-up. While automatic drain valves relieve the operator of draining reservoirs on a daily basis, these valves **MUST** be routinely checked for proper operation. Don't overlook them until they fail and a road call is required.

