

5 Tips to Prevent Brake Install Come-Backs

From a customer's perspective, there's nothing more frustrating than laying down big cash on a brake installation only to return a week later with "a pulsing brake pedal from a warped rotor."

At least that's what they're coming back to complain to you about. Except technically, the actual problem isn't a warped rotor - it is **brake judder** caused by improper bedding of the brake pads to the rotor.

Of course, most likely the rotor was not originally defective, because for all intents and purposes, rotors don't warp. And, a few simple steps before delivering the customer's car could have prevented this brake judder and other costly come-backs, because unfortunately, virtually all complaint issues can be attributed to improper installations.

So what's the secret to reducing come-backs?

Here are the top five tips to prevent brake judder and other easy-to-prevent re-service problems from brake installations - in order to guarantee the products you sell and install will perform as promised, helping you reduce money-losing come-backs and complaints.

5 Easy Tips from Centric Parts/StopTech:

Choose the correct friction material

Step one in preventing future call backs – sell a friction compound most suitable to the customer's specific driving conditions. When possible, interview the customer to determine their driving style (including any special conditions) and choose the appropriate pad. [Add link to chart.]

"A more expensive or higher heat range brake pad is not the ideal pad in all situations. Knowing the products well enough to educate customers as to the different characteristics of the brake pad choices across your product line will help customers select the brake pad that will perform to their expectations and cut down on come-backs," said Pat McCleish, technical lead at Centric Parts.

Keep It Clean

Even the slightest amount of oils and contaminants can cause problems bedding in new brake pads to brake rotors. Warm soapy water or brake cleaner is more than adequate for most jobs. Don't forget to clean the hub before installation too. Surface rust and road debris can dramatically effect fitment and performance. Clean and lube the caliper slide in and the abutment clip mating surfaces in the caliper bracket.

Measure Installed Lateral Run-Out

Even with new rotors, it is important to measure lateral run-out of the entire rotating assembly after the rotor is installed on the vehicle. Knowing that new rotors seldom have any run-out themselves right out of the box will help you spot hub issues that may cause problems down the road. Always refer to OEM service information to make sure specifications are met before completing the brake job.

"A dial indicator can be used to identify problems like damaged or worn hubs, debris in the hub or rotor mating surfaces, or improper wheel fastener torque – all of which can lead to brake judder. At the same time, this is a good opportunity to give the rotor a tug while watching your indicator to catch a loose wheel bearing that could be on its last leg." McCleish said.



Bleeding and ABS

The first thing to know is, a lousy bleed is going to make the best brake systems turn to mush, but worse potentially, lead to premature brake pad and rotor failure. Properly bleeding the brakes after changing pads almost always results in a firmer, more responsive brake pedal and better performance, even if the hydraulic system was not opened. Always follow manufacturer recommendations regarding brake fluid changes, and be sure to check the OEM service information for proper ABS and system bleeding.

“While conventional procedures work most of the time on most vehicles (during a flush or quick wheel end bleeding), Many vehicles equipped with ABS and traction control systems require a scan tool capable of performing an electronic bleeding procedure if air has been introduced into the system. Always consult OEM service information for the appropriate procedures.” McCleish said.

Properly Bed the Pads

Sadly, this is the secret sauce that many never take the time to do, yet according to McCleish, this is the make or break step to a proper functioning brake job.

Especially when dealing with a high performance, high temperature friction material, proper bed-in is critical in order to take full advantage of the pad’s performance and prevent judder issues.

“Always refer to the pad manufacturer’s recommended bed in process,” McCleish said. “When dealing with street pads, especially higher end pads like PosiQuiets that have been scorched, all that is necessary is a moderately aggressive road test followed by a mile or two of easy driving to cool things off before parking the car.”

If performance is not as expected, DO NOT RELEASE THE CAR TO THE CUSTOMER. Problems rarely solve themselves, McCleish added.

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