

**Wheels:** Jim writes, “On my 2001 Windstar, just the brake light comes on, and then both the brake light and ABS. Now they come on at different times and or don’t come on at all. Sometimes they won’t come on for a couple days. The mechanic told me over the phone to check the brake fluid level and it seemed to be normal. I started trying to be aware of the circumstances when they come on and I noticed it was with hard braking and 90 degree heat on the parking lot. The front brake pads were replaced at 51,957 miles and the rotors resurfaced. It now has 73,757. All day yesterday the lights didn’t come on and this afternoon after sitting in a restaurant parking lot, they came on. If I go out and drive it now, they probably won’t come on. It seems like the heat might cause the expansion of the fluid in the reservoir and triggers the sensor. I am not an expert on this and I have had good experience with consulting you on a couple of other problems.”

**Halderman:** I am assuming you are referring to the red brake warning light on the dash rather than the brake lights at the rear of the vehicle. The antilock brake system (ABS) warning lamp is amber and it lights whenever the ABS control unit detects a problem. The service technician was correct that one of the most common reasons for the red brake warning light to come on is low brake fluid level. The level could be down just a little to trigger the light. You indicated that it seemed normal, but double check that the level is between the “MAX” and “MIN” level lines. Do not fill above the maximum level because as the brake fluid increases in temperature, it expands and there has to be room in the reservoir for the fluid when it expands.

