

Wheels: Don H writes, “I have a 27-foot Class C motor home on a 1999 Ford E-450 chassis with 38,000 miles on it.

On a recent trip to Gatlinburg, Tennessee, on a 99°F day, the rig ran well until I was well into Pigeon Forge in stop-and-go traffic when the brakes began dragging. I proceeded at stop-and-go traffic speed about two miles to the campground. During one of the stops, I checked for evidence of brake fade, but noticed none. When I pulled into the campground, I spent about 10 minutes unhooking the towed car. The brakes were definitely hot. After the ten minutes of unhooking, I proceeded to the site and the brakes didn't seem to drag. Unfortunately, I wasn't able to locate a dealership easily and since there was no evidence of drag, I decided to head on back to Dayton. I checked the front wheel covers and wheels four times on the trip home and both felt cooler than the ambient air. Do you have any suggestions about why the brakes dragged and any maintenance I should perform? Thanks!”

Halderman: If the brakes are dragging, this can overheat the brake fluid and cause the brake fluid to boil, which can lead to a low brake pedal and possible loss of brakes. Therefore, it is important to find the root cause of the problem. The dragging brakes could be the front or the rear. The best way to approach this concern is to perform a thorough brake inspection of all components. Several possible reasons for the dragging brakes include:

1. A defective rubber brake line that has an internal fault that causes it to trap brake fluid and not allow it to return to the master cylinder when the brakes are released.
2. A stuck disc brake caliper.
3. Rusted caliper slides that do not allow the caliper to return to its normal position when the brake pedal is released.

Weak drum brake return springs. These springs can lose their tension due to heat and should be replaced every time the brakes are replaced to restore the brakes to like-new condition.

