

Wheels: An e-mail from Bob says, “I would like your analysis of the rear brakes on my 1995 Cutlass Supreme. The pads and rotors were replaced last July, and now have about 10,000 miles on them. The car has about 100,000 total miles. The rear brakes are adjusted by using the parking brake. For the past few months, I have a loud howling, moaning, and/or groaning sound when I apply the brakes. Most of the time, it occurs at slow speeds, going forward or backwards. The sounds are from the rear wheels or brakes. Can you help me with this problem?”

Halderman: First, the rear drum brakes on your vehicle automatically adjust when you apply and then release the brakes when traveling in reverse, and not when the parking brake is applied. The parking brake will cause the brakes to adjust on some vehicles equipped with rear disc brakes. The noise you are hearing can have many causes, including grease on the linings or a defective rear axle bearing. I suggest that the rear wheels and brake drums be removed and the rear brakes carefully inspected. One of the causes could be due to weak return and/or hold-down springs. Most experts recommend replacing the springs every time the brake linings are replaced to help prevent future problems.

