

Wheels: John writes that his 1999 Chevrolet Tahoe with 33,750 miles has a clunking or thumping noise in the rear of the vehicle during acceleration after a normal stop. It occurs mostly after a hard stop. Do you have any ideas?

Halderman: The most common cause of this type of noise is called spline bind. This problem can be easily repaired by having the service technician remove the driveshaft (called a propeller shaft by General Motors Corp.) and lubricating the splines after being sure they are free of any burrs. A special spline grease is then put on the splines and the driveshaft reinstalled.

Wheels: How can lubricating the driveshaft spline fix a clunking noise?

Halderman: When the truck stops, the rear axle assembly rotates slightly. This rotation applies a force on the driveshaft splines. When the vehicle is accelerated, the splines attempt to move back into position. If the splines are not properly lubricated, the driveshaft will clunk when the splines finally break loose.

Wheels: Are there any other possible causes of a clunk or thump in the rear of John's truck?

Halderman: I discovered a technical service bulletin (TSB) #86-50-27 that addresses a clunk or thump in the rear of some 1999 Chevrolet Tahoes but only during braking rather than during acceleration. The TSB states that the rear disc brake rotors should be replaced because they could be out of specification for surface finish or thickness.

