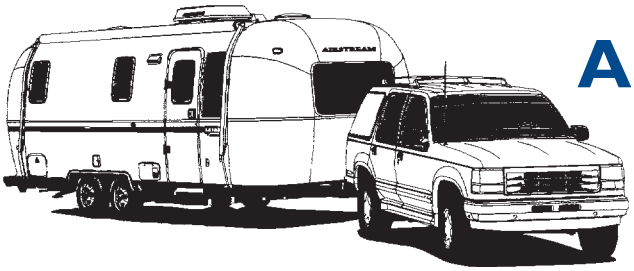

Airstream Tech Help Group

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This group has been established by WBCCI to help the membership with any of their technical RV problems. Examples of questions that might be of interest to many members will be published in the *Blue Beret*. We will respond directly to you, in response to your email or letter describing a problem you are having. We hope you will find this new service of value in the care and feeding of your RV. You may contact us as follows: techhelp@wbcci.org or by mail: Howard Lefkowitz, 11508 Colt Terrace, Silver Spring, MD 20902

Furnace Not Working

QUESTION: We have left our 1997 34' Excella 1000 trailer in Florida (Land Yacht Harbor) for the past three years. Last spring the furnace would not run. After checking connections and my limited inspection, I contacted an RV Service Technician. He has a truck that appears to be a total shop and he started checking components in the outside compartment. He was able to get the furnace to run by bypassing some connections. He found that all of the controls in the compartment seemed to check-out, including the circuit board. Then he told me that he would need to get on top of the trailer to check the circuit board under the air conditioner cover. Our trailer has the electronic thermostat that controls the fan, air conditioner, heat strip and furnace. He found that the furnace circuit in the main circuit board on the roof was dead. His estimate of replacement was $600-$700. However, he recommended that a separate thermostat be installed that would only control the furnace at a very much reduced cost. The electronic thermostat would continue to function. I did nothing, since we were returning home in a week and would contact him when we returned to Florida this fall.

Do you think that installing a separate thermostat is a good idea? Would it work? Do you need more information?

Thanks for your service to WBCCI members and for your recommendation for my furnace problem.

ANSWER: Yes, this will work fine and is a reasonable low cost solution to your problem. When a combination Comfort Control Center (CCC) electronic thermostat is used you have a single temperature sensor and point of control for all of your heating and cooling equipment. This system is very easy to use and provides a centrally located temperature sensor. For your furnace there are two leads that go to an electronic control board located in your air conditioner unit. Without the CCC these leads would go to a conventional wall thermostat designed to work with a house furnace. When you are below the temperature set on the thermostat a set of contacts would close calling for the furnace to start. Once the temperature set on the thermostat is reached the contacts open to turn off the furnace.

The CCC circuit board is expensive since it controls all temperature related equipment in the trailer. If only the furnace control circuit is not working then the solution proposed by your service technician is quite reasonable. He will have to run a pair of wires to the new thermostat and he should install it in the main living area, which will give you a reasonably balanced trailer temperature. Any standard inexpensive house thermostat (Home Depot available) will work fine.

Usually the failed component is the contacts in the furnace relay, which is located on the CCC electronic control board.

Howard

Trailer Brakes Not Working

Question: We own a 1986, 27' Airstream Sovereign Trailer, which is giving us brake problems. On the side opposite the door (right side) it does not have power to the brakes. The left side brakes are fine.

Thor says it is spliced up under the belly, but they are not sure where. We have contacted several sources and have been unable to find an answer. We would appreciate any help you could give us. Unfortunately, we are not close to any Airstream help and have several rallies coming up.

Answer: I know the feeling. Usually the breakage occurs at the connection between the brake pigtail leads and the 12 volt line. If your 12 volt wires to the brake pigtail do not have any voltage when you turn on the controller then the broken wire is indeed under the belly pan where the right and left side wires join the main feed line. Where the connection was made could be anybody's guess.

The easiest and fastest solution is to run a new wire from the front of the trailer (where your brake wire feed is) direct to the right side brakes. As a temporary fix, you could run this along the belly pan (for a quick solution) so you can go on the rallies. Just be sure to install some wire clamps.

The permanent solution is to run the wires inside the trailer along the wall. Since it is on the side away from the door, you just have to feed it through closets and behind moldings. Be sure and protect the wires if they have to go through any sheet metal using plastic or rubber grommets. Use nylon wire clamps that have a mounting hole to hold the wires in place. Near the brakes you will need to drill a hole through the floor and belly pan to feed the wire through. Get a 12" drill that will go through the floor and pan and stick out so you can see it. This would work best in a closet.

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Be sure and use a grommet on the belly pan. Don't forget to tape off the old wires, so they cannot cause a short if the connection comes back. Leave a reasonable loop and securely mount the wires next to the brake connection. Be sure and use the same size wire that is currently installed.

The only other solution I am aware of is to remove the belly pan, fix the connection, and re-rivet the pan. This is probably in the $500-$600 range and not a usual do-it-yourself job. Properly supporting the pan for both removal and re-installation is the big problem. Let me know how you make out.

Good luck. Howard

Response: Thanks! You have given me assurance on what to do. Will get to it this day and I have an appointment with a Trailer Service Company in October. The earliest they could do it. Thanks again. "Blue Beret" and you deserve a big pat. GREAT SERVICE Help!

Trailer Wheel Bearings

QUESTION: Is there any recommendation as to when trailer wheel bearings should be re-greased? Mileage or time?

ANSWER: Every 10,000 miles or at least once per year. Here is an excellent reference article: http://sierranevadaairstreams.org/owners-guide/maintaining/bearings/index.html. A great source for seals, bearings, races, brakes etc. : http://www.etrailer.com/. The page for the seals is: http://www.etrailer.com/Merchant2/merchant.mv?Screen=CTGY&Store_Code=E&Category_Code=Bearings. Etrailer.com also has some great videos.