



# Airstream Tech Help Group

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This group, part of the WBCCI Technical Standing Committee, has been established 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](mailto:techhelp@wbcci.org) or by mail: Howard Lefkowitz, 11508 Colt Terrace, Silver Spring, MD 20902

## AIRSTREAM CLASSIC TRAILERS SAFETY RECALL NOTICES

NHTSA Recall Number 12V532000 Dated 11/06/2012

This recall involves Airstream Classic Trailers built from 2006 thru 2009 model years with Dexter axles and hydraulic disk brakes. This only includes disk brakes installed on the original build and not disk brake conversions added after the unit was manufactured.

The reason for the recall is the brake hose may flex near the fitting on the brake assembly and lead to hose fatigue. In addition, during suspension travel, the brake hose may rub on the underside of the trailer.

Because of the flexing or rubbing, the brake hose may fail causing a loss of brake pressure and reducing brake performance. The loss of braking ability could result in a loss of vehicle control, increasing the risk of a crash.

This failure actually occurred on this year's Southwest Caravan with the failure of a brake line while coming down from a 9800' pass in Colorado. The Caravanner had a very scary ride down the mountain. He was able to get it repaired in Durango with Airstream's help and parts.

Airstream will contact known owners and offer to repair at no charge. The repair will consist of replacing the brake line and installing a 90-degree angle fitting and rerouting the line to eliminate the flexing of the brake line during travel.

If you own one of the affected trailers and have not been contacted by Airstream please contact your local dealer or Airstream direct at 937-596-6111.

NHTSA Recall Number 10v344000 Dated 7/22/2010

Airstream recalled certain model year 2005-2009 Classic Trailers manufactured from March 2005 through April 2009 and equipped with hydraulic brake controllers by Active Technologies. It is possible that the brake controller can fail unexpectedly causing the brakes on the trailer to lock up or fail completely.

The locking of the brakes or brake failure could result in a loss of vehicle control that could result in a crash and possible serious injury.

If you own an Active Technologies brake controller contact your local Airstream Dealer.

**Each member who has hydraulic brakes should, at least once a year, check all of his brake lines for wear or rubbing as well as all of the fittings for fluid leakage.**

**Make sure all of the clamps are properly installed and securely mounted.**

Chuck Helwig

## SAFETY DETECTORS

I would like to remind everyone about the care, maintenance and replacement of the Smoke, Carbon Monoxide and LP Gas Detectors. All of these safety devices need to be replaced periodically because over time the sensors lose their detection ability.

Smoke detectors have a life span of ten years; some newer ones will have a replace by date on the detector. To maintain your smoke detector, vacuum and replace the battery annually. As part of getting your RV ready for a trip operate the test button, which insures that the electronics and battery are functioning. You should have one mounted on the ceiling or high on the wall in the kitchen area. For larger RV's you should consider adding an additional unit in the sleeping area. Also, check your emergency egress from the sleeping area to make sure it functions and you are familiar with its use. There are several different types of smoke detectors with a wide range of costs. Usually the least expensive UL approved unit is all that is necessary. Fancy digital readouts do nothing to enhance its function.

Carbon monoxide detectors have a life span of five to seven years. Carbon monoxide kills quickly by reducing the oxygen to the brain. The source of the carbon monoxide could be from a defective heat source (furnace), a generator or a nearby RV or truck. All RV's that include a factory-supplied generator have built in CO detectors. If you camp with other RV's that have generators, carry a portable generator, park overnight in a truck stop or might dry camp in the winter on a Caravan, you should definitely have a CO detector. It should be mounted in the bedroom area on the wall or ceiling. In the fall vacuum the unit and replace the battery to make sure you are ready for the heating season. Again, as part of your trip get-ready, test the electronics and battery.

LP (propane) gas detectors are the most ignored detector in your unit. It just sits there not making a sound and we assume everything is just fine. These detectors have a life span of five to seven years, after which they gradually lose their ability to detect gases. Some manufacturers are now building in a warning alarm to sound five years after the unit

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is powered on, in order to remind you to replace the detector. To maintain your LP detector use the test button once a month and vacuum annually. Propane detectors are relatively expensive (\$60 to \$75) compared to a smoke or CO detector. Also they are much harder to find and are not stocked by any of the major hardware dealers. You can purchase them at RV dealers or on-line.

Many of the older Airstreams did not come with an LP detector. This would be a wise addition. Just locate it close to the floor (LP gas is heavier than air) away from doors and windows. It should be wired directly to the battery so it stays on when you turn the power off in your unit. The positive wire going to the unit should be fused as close to the source of power as possible. Most of the detectors have a very low power draw from 46ma to 125ma, so it will not drain your battery.

Chuck Helwig

### TV OPERATION ON AN INVERTER

**QUESTION:** I have a 2008, 20 ft. Safari with a 21 inch TV. I bought a 140-watt plug-in inverter that is right next to the TV. Is it ok to plug in my TV? How long will it run before

my two batteries run down? Is the wiring sufficient? Thanks in advance, Bob

**ANSWER:** The inverter power rating limits the size of the TV you can safely use. Your TV power requirement should be about 25% less than the inverter rating. Check the input power requirements for your TV. For a 21" TV it can run from 40 to 120 watts depending on the type of screen (LCD, LED, CRT tube, etc.). The TV power requirement increases rapidly as the screen size gets larger. Assuming your TV requires 120 watts then:

$$P \text{ (power)} = E \text{ (voltage)} \times I \text{ (current)}$$

Your current requirement, with 120 volts AC, would be about one amp. This is easily supplied with the cigar lighter plug-in connector and wires usually provided with this size inverter. Assuming you have a battery capability of about 150 amp/hours (two coach units) you could run your TV for over 75 hours (50% of its stored power).

Since you may have other stuff running from the batteries and you will probably not watch TV for more than a few hours the answer is, **no problem.**

Howard