

Principles of Operation

Brake System

Applying the brake pedal uses lever action to push a rod into the brake booster, which through the use of vacuum, boosts the force of the rod and then transmits this force to the primary piston in the master cylinder. This produces hydraulic pressure in the master cylinder. This pressure builds in the master cylinder and brake tubes as the brake pedal is applied further. The pressure between the primary and secondary piston forces the secondary piston to compress, building pressure in its circuit. The hydraulic pressure is transmitted by brake fluid through the brake tubes to the ABS Hydraulic Control Unit (HCU), which then distributes that pressure to the individual brake calipers. The brake calipers use hydraulic pressure to apply the pads. The application of the brake pads will cause the rotation of the wheels to slow or stop, depending on how much brake pressure is applied. The parking brakes carry out the same function except that they are mechanically actuated by a cable that connects only to the rear brakes.

Brake Master Cylinder Compensator Ports

The purpose of the compensator ports in the brake master cylinder is to supply additional brake fluid from the master cylinder reservoir when needed by the brake system due to brake lining wear and allow brake fluid to return to the master cylinder reservoir when the brakes are released. The returning brake fluid creates a slight turbulence in the master cylinder reservoir. This is a normal condition and indicates that the compensator ports are not clogged. Clogged compensator ports may cause the brakes to hang up or not fully release.

Red Brake Warning Indicator

The red brake warning indicator alerts the driver to certain conditions that exist in the brake system. The Instrument Cluster (IC) performs a bulb check when the ignition key is turned to the RUN position. The conditions that cause the indicator to illuminate are low brake fluid level, the parking brake is applied or there is a fault in the ABS (if the yellow ABS warning indicator is also illuminated). To diagnose red brake warning indicator concerns, refer to [Section 413-01](#).
