All current production motorcycles, including sidecars, use DOT 5 silicone type brake fluid. Service Bulletin No. M-712, dated June 16, 1977, outlined specific service procedures and guidelines for all brake system components including those characteristic to DOT 5 brake fluid use. We are restating those service procedures that are required when attaching an earlier sidecar (one using DOT 3 Glycol type fluid) to a current production vehicle (one using DOT 5 silicone type fluid).

When attaching an earlier sidecar (operated with DOT 3 in the system) to a later motorcycle with DOT 5 in the motorcycle hydraulic system, the following procedure must be followed to ensure that the motorcycle brake system parts will not be contaminated by old DOT 3 fluid. Old fluid could be contaminated with water and if mixed with the new DOT 5 fluid, it would detract from its effectiveness. The old DOT 3 fluid could also cause varnish deposits if the system is operated above the boiling point of DOT 3. Caution should be used when bleeding because any brake fluid on the pad will contaminate the pad material and reduce brake effectiveness. The fluid absorbed by the pads cannot be removed satisfactorily with any solvent nor by operating the brakes.

1. Disconnect sidecar brake line from wheel cylinder and drain out old brake fluid from hydraulic line and flush line with new DOT 5 fluid several times to remove all the old fluid. Solvent flushing is not recommended.

2. Remove rubber brake hose from other end of line and replace it with a new one.


4. Wash individual parts clean (including inside bore of master cylinder and brake line using denatured alcohol).

5. Using clean, dry, compressed air, blow all parts completely dry.

6. Reconnect brake line to wheel cylinder and other end with new hose to motorcycle hydraulic line fitting.

7. Install new DOT 5 in motorcycle rear brake system and bleed sidecar brake first, then rear brake. Use brake bleeding procedure given in the Service Manual. Fluid leakage from the rear master cylinder boot is often caused by excessive piston travel due to air in the system. The boot should be wiped clean of any brake fluid to avoid contaminating the cylinder with road dust.

8. Static test system by operating brake pedal prior to operating motorcycle.

HARLEY-DAVIDSON MOTOR CO., INC.