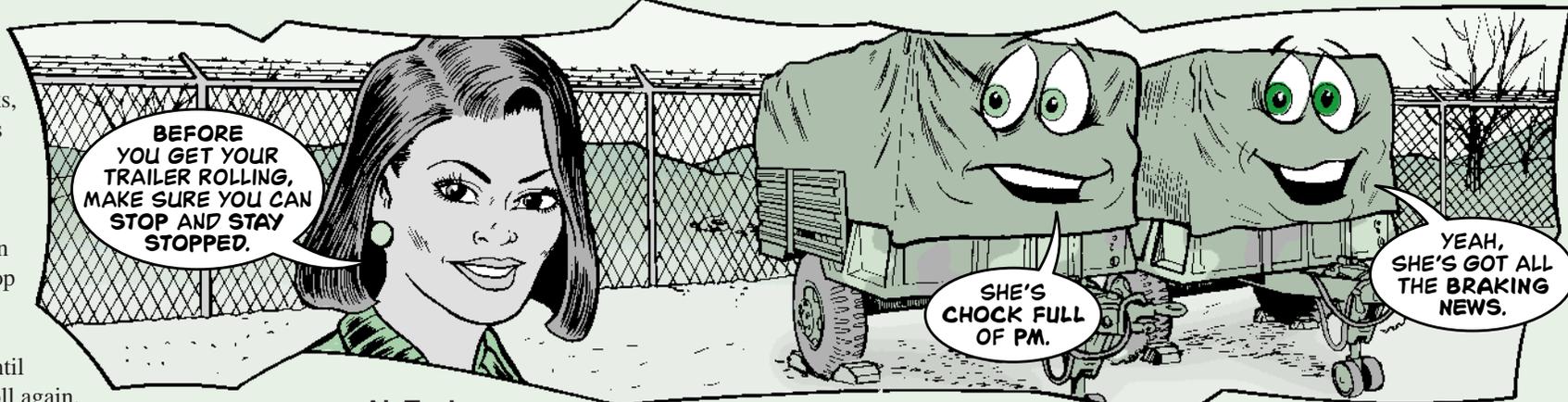


PM Puts the Brakes On

Drivers, what do master cylinders, air tanks, emergency brakes and chock blocks have in common?

If each is used properly and taken care of, they'll stop your trailer or semitrailer...and keep it stopped until you're ready to roll again.



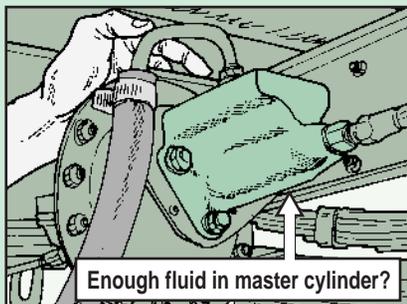
Master Cylinders

Many small trailers have hydraulic brakes. That means they've got a master cylinder that needs regular service.

Some are easy to find, like the one on M149A2 water trailers. It's right behind the lunette.

Others are not so easy. On other 1 1/2-ton trailers, the cylinder is under the chassis, next to the curbside wheel.

Your operator's manual will pinpoint the location. Then you need to make sure there's enough fluid in the master cylinder to make the brakes work.

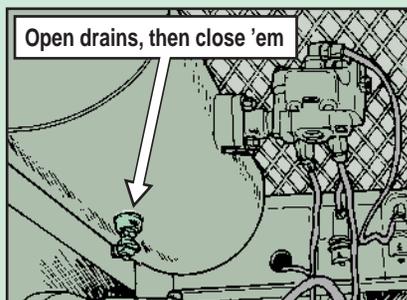


Air Tanks

Other trailers, especially semitrailers, use air brakes. That means there are air tanks to be drained each day after operation. Draining gets rid of water that would freeze brake lines in cold weather or corrode them in any weather.

After you drain the air tanks, close the drain cocks. Leaving them open lets condensation back inside the tanks when temperatures go from hot to cool.

An open drain cock also lets anything small enough to crawl inside (like bugs) or to blow inside (like dirt).



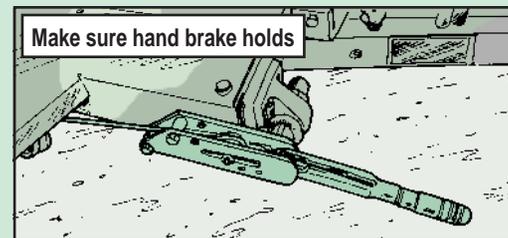
Before You Go

When you're ready to go, a quick check to make sure your brakes are hooked up right is to roll and stop the vehicle. If it stops, then rolls again once the brakes are released, the brakes are right.

If the trailer rolls, stops, and won't roll again when the brakes are released, the brakes are locked up, which means only one thing—the air lines are connected backward. So, change 'em.

Emergency!

It does no good to set your emergency brake if it doesn't work, so be sure it does.



While your trailer is still hooked up, set the brake and try to pull the trailer forward with the truck. If the brakes are working, the tires won't roll.

On the other hand, forget using trailer emergency brakes during cold weather. The cable and handle can freeze and break when you try to use them. Then you can't release the brakes. During cold weather, always use two chock blocks instead of emergency brakes.

If your trailer's not hooked to a truck, and it's on level ground, use chocks in front of one wheel and behind the wheel on the other side.

Put both chocks on the downhill side when parked on a slope. Before moving out, stow the blocks in a safe place, like in their brackets, in a tool box or in some other handy place.