

# UNDER THE HOOD

## WITH THE MOTOR MEDICS

Dear Motor Medics,

Kind of a goofy question. At work I drive a 2001 E250 Ford van. It has an alarm that tells you when the seat belt has not been fastened. That alarm went off in spite of my being strapped in, and continued to bark at me every 30 seconds for the next several miles. I pulled off the road, and under the driver's seat found a two wire connector which I unhooked. It killed the seatbelt alarm, but turned on the warning light for the air bag. My question is, is there a chance that there could be an unexpected deployment of the bag or bags? My guess would be that they would not deploy in a crash.

Thanks as always.

Vern from Iowa Great Lakes

Thank you for listening Vern. The seat belts in newer vehicles are part of the air bag system. They have at a minimum a belt buckle monitor and may also include a belt pre-tensioner

which is designed to take up belt slack before air bag deployment. It sounds like the buckle switch has failed. By unplugging the switch the noise may stop but the air bag computer now detects a fault in the circuit and has turned on the on the light. You are correct in that most systems will disarm the air bags in a crash whenever the lamp is on so it would be a good idea to get the system repaired.

Take care, Russ.

Dear Motor Medics,

I have a 1995 Nissan pickup XE V6 5-speed and my parking brakes drag whenever I use them. The vehicle is not used very much and since it's a 5 speed I just leave it in gear so it doesn't roll away. It's a one owner with 98,000 miles and only driven a couple times a month now. What is causing the rear brakes to not release with the brake handle? I want to sell the vehicle so I don't want to spend a lot on it but want it safe.

Any suggestions would be appreciated.

Thank you, Terry in Sioux Falls.

Thank you for listening Terry. The parking brakes on many manual transmission vehicles rarely get used. The rare usage is usually the cause of the brakes not releasing. Some vehicles hold themselves very well when left in gear without the brake on but others don't. Often vehicles end up severely damaged when they roll away. Nissan parking brakes have a lever internally and a cable externally. Both of these parts will bind from lack of use. If you spray a penetrating lube such as Justice Brothers JB 80 or equivalent on the lever and cable end and then operate the brakes several times you may be able to free them. Once free I would use them each time you park to insure they stay free. If the vehicle is going to sit for more than a few days they may start to bind again and you will need to repeat the process so keep that in mind.

Take care, Russ.

If you have questions for the Motor Medics email them to [Help@underthehoodshow.com](mailto:Help@underthehoodshow.com). We will respond to your email quickly and may print it in The Motor Market. Listen to Under the Hood on KELO am 1320 Thursdays at 10:00 and Sundays at 5:00 or on a station near you. We can also be found on the internet at [www.underthehoodshow.com](http://www.underthehoodshow.com).

*Advice given by the Motor Medics is for use as a guide to repair. Always check with your favorite repair shop for verification. The motor medics have been operating a repair shop and answering questions on the air for 19 years. Russ is an ASE Master Certified Technician with extensive dealer and aftermarket training. Shannon is an ASE Certified Parts Specialist with more than 30 years in the automotive world. You can ask a question of The Motor Medics by going to [help@underthehoodshow.com](mailto:help@underthehoodshow.com) we will answer your question on line and you may see it appear in this publication. The Under The Hood Show can be heard each week on local stations with coverage reaching 7 states and on [www.underthehoodshow.com](http://www.underthehoodshow.com). Go to [Underthehoodshow.com](http://Underthehoodshow.com) to find one near you. TMM*

