



COACHMEN RECREATIONAL VEHICLE COMPANY, LLC

January 31, 2003

George H. Person
Chief, Recall Analysis Division
National Highway Traffic Safety Administration
400 Seventh St., S.W.
Washington, DC 20590

Re: Ford F53 Motorhome Chassis - Brake Warning Indicator

Dear Mr. Person:

Pursuant to Part 573 of Title 49 of the Code of Federal Regulations, this correspondence is to serve as our notification to NHTSA concerning a noncompliance to FMVSS 105 S5.3 based upon a defective component supplied to Coachmen Recreational Vehicles, LLC by Ford Motor Company.

Coachmen Recreational Vehicles, LLC received notification from Ford Motor Company that a potential problem may exist with the instrument panel of the Ford F53 motorhome chassis they supply Coachmen. Their notification stated:

"The instrument panel, as shipped by Ford, may not be wired correctly to illuminate the brake warning indicator for a check indicator function and/or a low brake fluid condition on the affected vehicles. Federal Motor Vehicle Safety Standard (FMVSS) NO. 105 S5.3 ... specifies that this check of the brake warning indicator function and the low brake fluid indication be provided."

Coachmen relies on Ford's Incomplete Vehicle Manual (IVM) compliance statement as sole certification of the brake system warning indicator. Since Ford's instrument panel does not function as it should, Ford's IVM compliance statement is invalid and as a result, a non-compliance exist with FMVSS 105 S5.3 on the motorhomes Coachmen manufactured using the defective Ford instrument panel.

The affected Ford chassis are certain 2000 through 2003 model year F53 Chassis built at their IMMSA and Detroit Chassis Plant from May 13, 1999 through October 22, 2002. Ford has indicated that Coachmen received 3,539 of these chassis. Coachmen used these chassis to build our Model Year 2000 through 2003 Mirada, Aurora and Rendezvous Class A motorhomes during that same time period.

Ford has provided detailed instructions for remedying their defect (copy enclosed).

RECEIVED
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OFFICE OF INVESTIGATION

A similar issue with Ford's brake warning indicator light issue came up in August, 1999 at which time Ford administered the remedy program (ref: EQ99-005 - 1999 F53 Brake System Warning Indicator), with Coachmen assisting by supplying them the mailing list of registered owners of affected Coachmen RV vehicles. We expect that Ford will accept the same level of responsibility with this current matter and will be supplying NHTSA any further information that is required.

Should you have any additional questions or need additional information, please do not hesitate to contact me at (219) 825-8528.

Very Truly Yours,



Gary L. Duncan
Vice President, Engineering Services

Cc: Mike Terlep
Rick Lavers

INSTRUMENT CLUSTER BRAKE WARNING LAMP CIRCUIT REVISION

AFFECTED VEHICLES: CERTAIN 2000 THROUGH 2003 MODEL YEAR
F-53 CHASSIS VEHICLES

OVERVIEW

This procedure provides the detail for revising the brake warning lamp circuit. A bulb will be repositioned from one socket to another within the instrument cluster, and a single wire will be moved from one instrument cluster connector to another. A verification check will also be performed to ensure a proper repair.

SERVICE PROCEDURE

1. Install a memory saver and disconnect the battery negative cable.

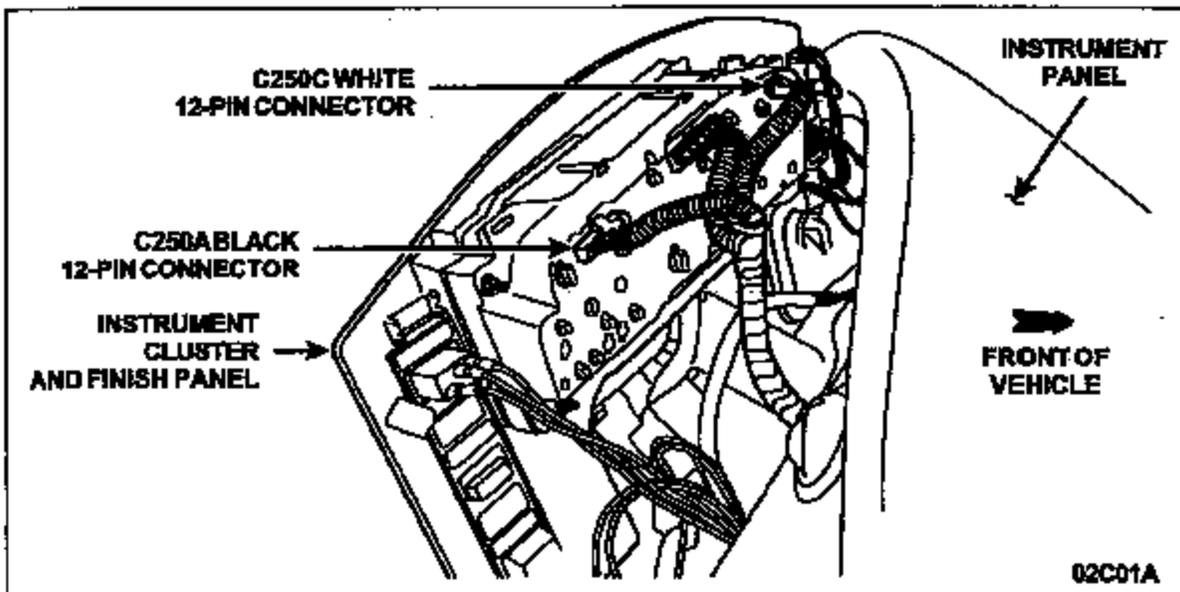
NOTE

Due to the various F-53 chassis body builder configurations, specific detail for access to the instrument cluster will not be provided.

Gain access to and pull the instrument cluster back from the instrument panel.

NOTE: It is not necessary or desirable to remove the cluster from the finish panel, though positioning the shift lever to "1" may be helpful. This should provide suitable access to the repair area. See Figure 1.

2. Disconnect the C250A (black 12-pin connector) and C250C (white 12-pin connector) instrument cluster electrical connectors. See Figure 1.

**FIGURE 1**

3. Remove the tape and the convolute from the C250A and C250C harnesses up to the point they join the main harness. Retain the convolute. It will be reinstalled. See Figure 2.

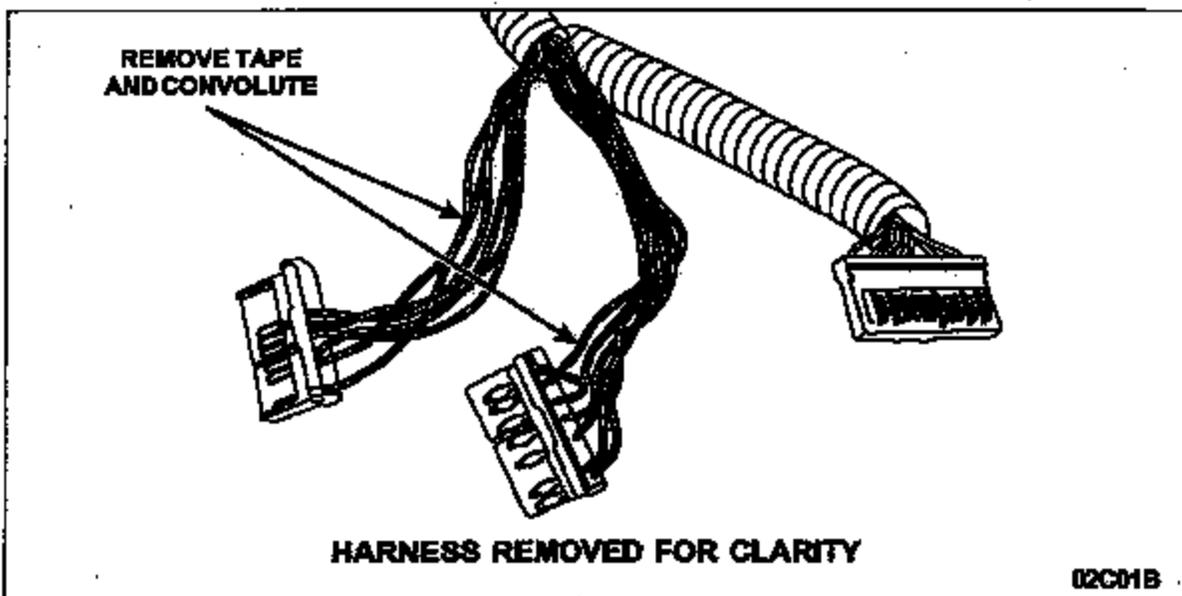


FIGURE 2

▲ CAUTION!

DO NOT reference the published wiring diagrams as the information for these particular connectors may not be correct.

4. Open the black 12-pin connector locking clamp. See Figure 3.

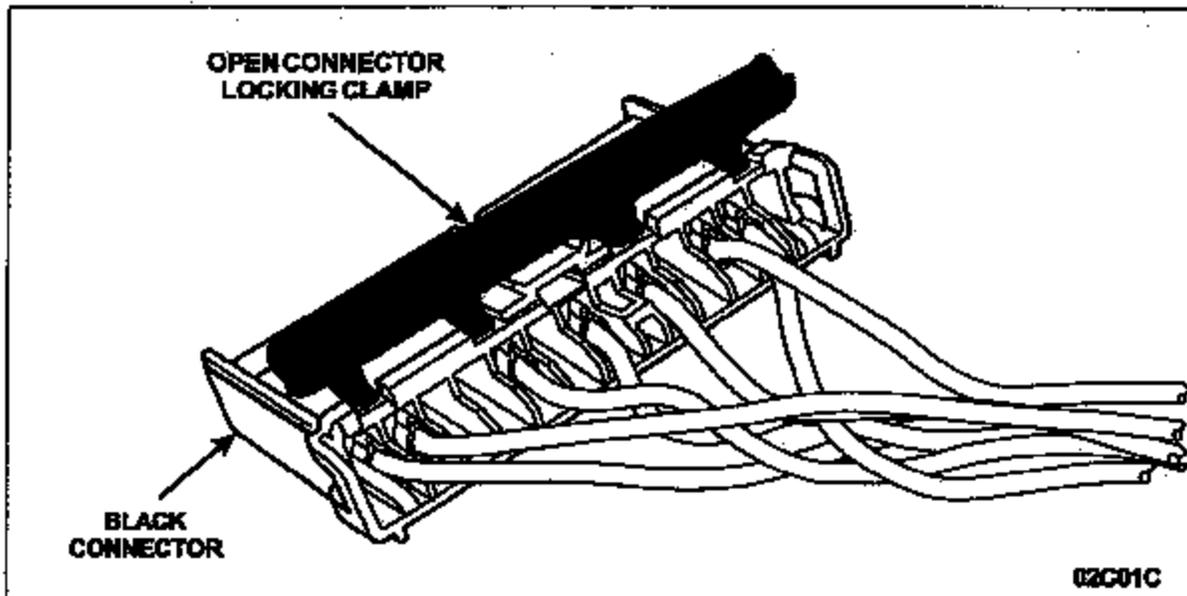


FIGURE 3

5. Remove the VIOLET/WHITE wire from cavity No. 3 by pushing the small release tab and pulling the wire out of the cavity. Then, close the locking clamp. See Figure 4.

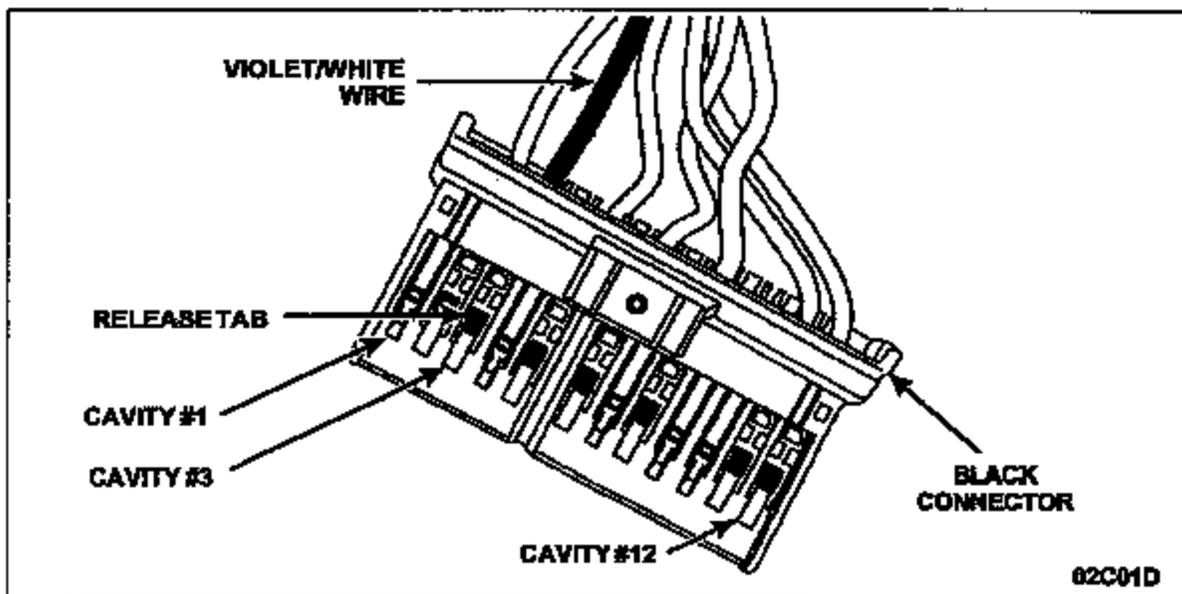


FIGURE 4

6. Open the white 12-pin connector locking clamp and install the VIOLET/WHITE wire into cavity No. 10. Pull the white wire with light force to make sure it is fully seated. Then, close the locking clamp. See Figure 5.

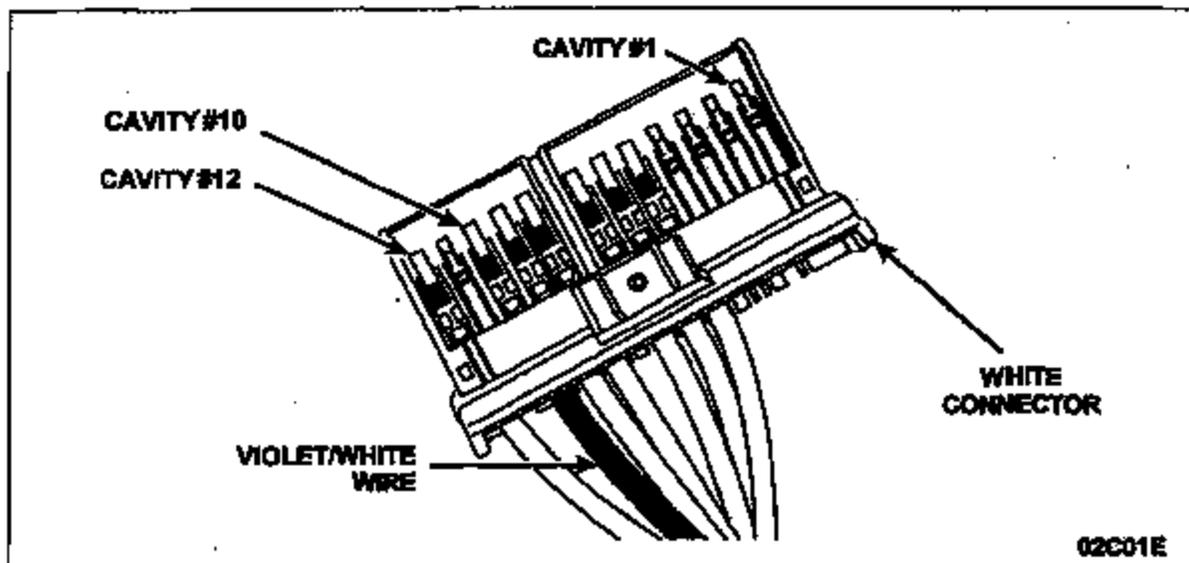


FIGURE 5

7. Install the convolute and relape both harnesses.
8. Remove the bulb from the "BRAKE" socket and transfer it to the vacant "BRK" socket located on the opposite side of the cluster. See Figure 6.

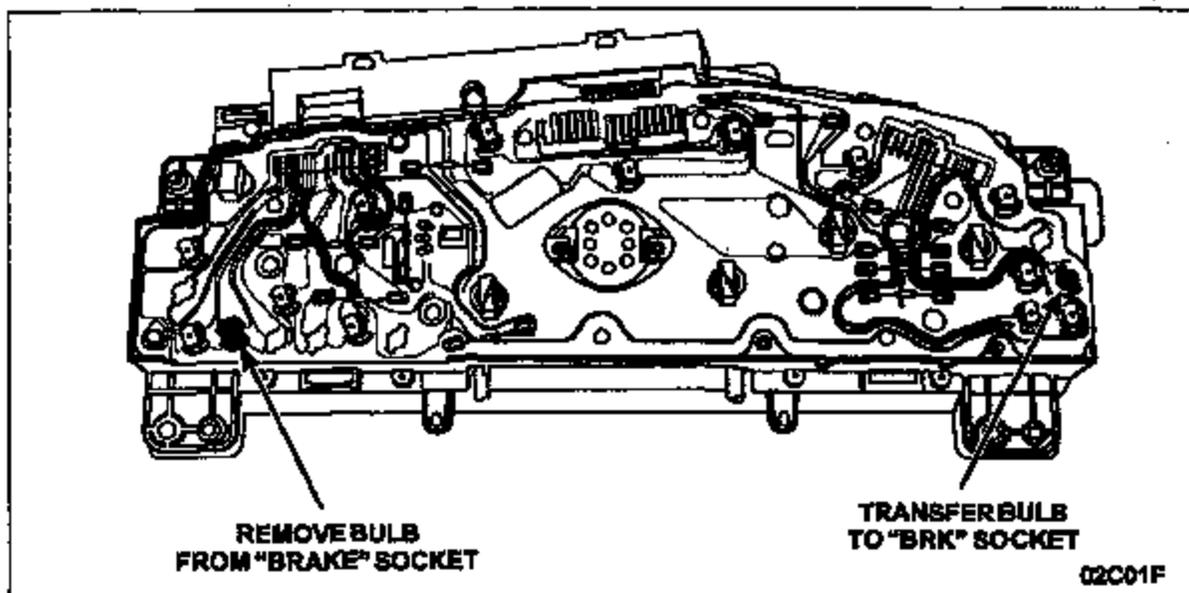


FIGURE 6

9. Connect the electrical connectors.
10. Reinstall the cluster and all trim removed during disassembly.
11. Connect the battery negative cable and remove the memory saver.

REPAIR VERIFICATION

These checks are to ensure the BRAKE warning lamp [with the exclamation point 

VEHICLES EQUIPPED WITH HYDRO-MAX

1. Make sure the parking brake is disengaged, then turn the ignition key to the ON position (do not start engine). The brake warning lamp  should illuminate along with the Hydro-Max warning lamp [with the lightning bolt ].
2. Start the engine and apply the parking brake. The brake warning lamp  should illuminate. Disengage the parking brake and the lamp should turn off.
3. With the engine still running, locate the 2-wire connector at the left side of the master cylinder and disconnect it. Ground the VIOLET/WHITE wire to the chassis. The brake warning lamp  should illuminate. Remove the ground, reconnect the connector and turn the engine off.

VEHICLES EQUIPPED WITH HYDRO-BOOST

1. Make sure the parking brake is disengaged, then while starting the engine, verify the brake warning lamp  illuminates when the ignition key is in the START position. Once the engine starts and the key is in the ON position, the lamp should turn off.
2. With the engine running, apply the parking brake. The brake warning lamp  should illuminate. Disengage the parking brake and the lamp should turn off.
3. With the engine still running, locate the 2-wire connector at the left side of the master cylinder and disconnect it. Ground the VIOLET/WHITE wire to the chassis. The brake warning lamp  should illuminate. Remove the ground, reconnect the connector and turn the engine off.