

Brakes on the 1988 Fiero are Unique?!

Yes they are, because previous models used many parts including brakes, from the Chevette or GM X-Cars. I also believe that in anticipation of “blowing the doors off” the Corvette, the ‘88s were a step forward to the ‘89 which required both improvements of suspension and brakes. Because of the limited production of the ‘88s, parts like rebuilt Caliper Assemblies can be hard to come by.

However, first the issue which I experienced for the first time of 33 years of ownership and 54,000 miles, a “grabby” resistance to forward movement that would “come and go!” It gradually got more frequent, even pulling to the front right, but still “come and go”. Then at the LaFontaine car show it was even happening in reverse! However in reverse it became consistent enough that I could demonstrate to the mechanic that I had a problem.

The “grabbing” was caused by a brake fluid leak in the right front caliper piston. Because of the age of my Fiero I decided to do both front calipers. The mechanic was able to find a Left Caliper Assembly but not the Right. I also tried but no Rights were available’.

The Fiero Store had none and I found sources that could supply me with the Caliper Rebuild Kit (elastomer Boot and Seal) and a piston. When I delivered them to the mechanic it appeared the Seal was the wrong size (too large), but also found that my original piston was in good shape.

I called the Fiero Store, told them about my dilemma and they said they rebuild Caliper Assemblies (when the Calipers and Caliper Housings are available) all the time with their Rebuild Kits (consisting of Seal and Boot) and that they could instruct the mechanic if needed, how to install the Seal. Problem solved! Why? Because the Seal must be first installed into the groove of the Caliper Housing in order to properly fit over the Piston.

In the Fiero Service Manual, Section 5 page 4, there is a list of described brake symptoms to address and mine was “Grabby Brakes” (Apparent off-on condition). In Section 5B4 Page 7, are detailed illustrations for the replacement of the Caliper Piston Seal and the Boot. I did not study the manual initially (mistake) because what’s to be complicated about a brake job!

The Rear Brake Calipers are more complex in design, but I believe the Piston, Seal and Boot are the same. However, the availability of the Rear Caliper Assemblies could also be dicey. I would think that if your 1988 Fiero has been fairly well protected from corrosive weather elements, and dirt roads, all you should need are the Rebuild Kits.

Keep On Fieroing!

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