



**Rick March, General Manager
Customer Relations Group**

Hello, another month has past and the weather continues to improve. I am sure a lot of you have already taken a trip while the rest of you are getting everything ready to set out on an adventure of your own. In recent articles I have discussed getting your Airstream ready for travel which included de-winterizing, hitch inspection etc. This month we will be keeping with the same theme as I want to explain axle wheel bearings. Nev-R-Lube Cartridge bearings to be exact.

In 2006 model year Airstream started using the Nev-R-Lube axle bearing on the Classic models which also had disc brakes. In the 2010 model year they made these bearings standard on all trailers built that were 25 feet and longer. In the near future we will be adding these bearing to more of our product line.

We get questions all the time concerning these bearings and to see if they can install these in place of the standard bearing set which has been used for many years. Owners are trying to break free from the routine maintenance required of cleaning and repacking these bearings. If you have the standard bearings they **cannot** be replaced by the Nev-R-Lube style. There were changes made to both the hub size and the spindle size. The complete axle would have to be replaced.

I do want to emphasize if you do have a trailer that has the Nev-R- Lube bearings installed there are periodic checks that need to be performed to make sure they are in good working order. I will outline these checks along with the benefits below.



Dexter Assembly Cut Away Showing the Nev-R-Lube Bearing



Nev-R-Lube Bearing

What are the advantages of the Dexter Nev-R- Lube bearings?

- No need to pull the hubs to repack the bearings or replace the grease seals when checking the brakes.
- No more inner and outer bearings. Just one sealed bearing cartridge.
- Pre-set adjustment means installation is easy and human error is virtually eliminated in bearing adjustment.
- Pre-lubricated at the bearing factory providing resistance to contamination.
- Sealed for life which means increased durability and reliability and no more bearing maintenance.
- 5 year or 100,000 mile warranty against defects in material and workmanship.

Nev-R-Lube Bearing maintenance needing performed every 12 months or 12,000 miles.

1. Elevate and support the trailer unit per manufactures instructions. Never jack the trailer up on any part of the axle. Always jack the trailer up on the main frame rails of the trailer.
2. Check for excessive wheel end clearance by pulling the tire assembly towards you and by pushing the assembly away from you. Slight end play is acceptable.
3. Rotate tire slowly forwards and backwards. The wheel should turn freely and smoothly.
4. Excessive wheel end play, restriction to rotation, noise, or bumpy rotation should be remedied by replacing the bearing unit.

Note: A slight amount of grease weeping from the seal is normal. Excessive leakage may indicate abnormal bearing operation.

Nev-R-Lube Bearing end play inspection.

Airstream uses the 42MM Nev-R-Lube bearing (Dexter part number 31-73-3) in the trailers. The tilt value for this bearing is .005 per inch. So to find total axle end play allowance you would multiply .005 by half of the complete tire diameter. Example: the tire measures 30 inches in diameter. Multiply .005 by 15 to get the maximum axle end play which would be .075.

Note: It is important to note that most mounted tires will deflect fairly easily when enough hand pressure is applied while moving it at the top and bottom. Excessive pressure will result in the perception that the bearing's tilt is greater than it actually is. If possible this should be checked by a professional.

The important thing to remember is that even though this bearing is sealed and does not need lubricated it still needs to have a yearly inspection for the end play. Having this checked will hopefully keep you from having wheel bearing issues on that next adventure you are planning.

Portions of this article were taken directly from the Dexter Axle web-site.

I would love hearing from you and if you have a suggestion or topic you would like to see covered in a future article, or have a question just drop me a line at rmarch@airstream.com .

Have a great month!

Rick March