



SUFFOLK CENTRE

TIPS AND IDEAS



(Researched and written by Chris Sanderson)

Noisy Alko 2004 & 3004 model Stabiliser Hitches



I for one suffered last season with a very noisy stabiliser hitch inasmuch it groaned and creaked very loudly whenever I turn anything but the slightest bend in the road. Attempts to clean the friction pads in situ using fine grit emery paper failed to clear the problem. So taking advice from a fellow rallier, I set about removing the friction pads in order to give them a thorough inspection and clean. The normal method of removing the pads as recommended by Alko is to remove the small red end caps and drift the pads out inwards. This is fine if you wish to renew the pads but a simpler method for cleaning only is to remove the stabiliser arms and pads complete.

You will need a Torx 30 Tool (see note) to remove the handle and stabiliser arms. (see arrowed points)
First remove the bolt securing the handle to the stabiliser arms and remove handle. Then working on one stabiliser arm remove the three securing bolts/fixings. Carefully remove the arm and friction pad taking note of any shim washers etc.
Carefully clean the pad using fine grit emery paper making sure the dished profile shape of the pad is maintained. Clean any residue from the friction pad using white spirit or meths.
Reassemble and then remove second arm and repeat cleaning operation.

Ensure that all bolts/fixings are fully tightened and recheck after towing again for the first time.

For cleaning the fore and aft friction pads in the hitch, it is recommended that these are checked and cleaned in situ. They are made from a plastic material unlike the side pads and are unlikely to be as contaminated or dirty. A simply wipe over with white spirits or meths should be adequate to clean them.

Note - Torx 30 bits are normally part of multi-screwdriver sets that can be purchased nowadays.

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UPDATE:

Alko Stabilisers - noise problems. My guidance in the last Tips & Ideas (Feb 2010) covered checking and cleaning the friction pads on the Alko 2004 & 3004 type Stabilisers. Curious as to what was causing the friction pads to contaminate, I spoke to one of the Alko Reps at this years NEC Caravan Show. Having had the problem previously drawn to their attention, Alko had carried out detailed tests on the carbon deposits found on the pad surfaces. The tests revealed the carbon to have been derived from exhaust emissions in particular those of diesel cars.

The conclusions drawn was that not all diesel powered vehicles will cause the contamination as several other factors have to be considered, like the position of the exhaust to the tow hitch, the design of the vehicle and air movements around such whilst travelling etc.

For those of us who have experienced the problem at least we are now aware of what is causing it and regular checks and cleaning should prevent noise re-occurrence