

**OPERATION MAINTENANCE SERVICE MANUAL**  
**E/H 1000 & 1600 BRAKE ACTUATORS**

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**DEXTER AXLE**

[www.dexteraxle.com](http://www.dexteraxle.com)

# Introduction

This manual has been provided to guide you through the process of installing, operating, and maintaining your Dexter E/H 1000 or E/H 1600 hydraulic brake system actuator. This electrically powered unit has been designed and manufactured to give safe, reliable power to your hydraulic trailer brakes.

Before proceeding, make sure that the unit is appropriate for your particular brakes. The E/H 1000 produces 1000 psi, typically used for duo-servo hydraulic drum brakes, while the E/H 1600 produces 1600 psi for most hydraulic disc brakes. Please refer to your brake manufacturer for proper operating pressures.

This new Dexter actuator is compatible with many electric brake controllers, but the best performance will be achieved using an inertial type controller such as the Dexter Predator DX2. The electronic timer type of controller is not recommended because these units use a fixed control that does not sense varying brake requirements.

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## **CAUTION**

This is the safety alert symbol. It is used to alert you to potential injury hazards. Obey all safety messages that follow this symbol to avoid possible injury or death.

# **Actuator Installation Instructions**

## ***Getting Started***

The following materials are required to properly install the Dexter E/H unit. If your trailer is not already equipped with brake lines, you will need enough  $\frac{3}{16}$ " diameter automotive brake line to connect the trailer brakes to the unit. Where possible, steel tubing is preferred.

- Four  $\frac{1}{4}$ " threaded fasteners to mount the unit to the trailer.
- One quart of DOT 3, DOT 4, or DOT 5 brake fluid (from a new sealed container).
- One emergency breakaway kit - must include a 12 volt, 9 amp hour (minimum) battery.
- Wire (see Electrical Installation Requirements for proper wire size).

Location of the Dexter E/H actuator is at the discretion of the vehicle owner. When selecting the location, the following items should be considered:

1. The shorter the wiring between the unit and the electrical power source, the smaller the voltage drop.
2. The unit should be located so that the electrical wiring and brake lines can be neatly routed directly to the towing vehicle and trailer brakes. Special care should be taken to minimize the number of bends and fittings in the brake line circuits.
3. An emergency breakaway kit must be located on the trailer so that the trailer breakaway cable can be easily attached to the towing vehicle.





4. The Dexter E/H actuator is powered from the electrical system on the tow vehicle. In order for the unit to function properly, it must have adequate electrical power (see Electrical Installation Requirements).
5. The Dexter E/H unit should not be placed in an area where it is susceptible to damage from trailer loads, road debris, or from being stepped on. Failure to protect the actuator from damage can cause the unit to malfunction and void the Dexter Axle warranty.

Mounting consideration should be given to the following:

1. The unit must be level, with the filler neck up.
2. It is the responsibility of the customer to provide necessary fasteners for attachment of the actuator to the trailer.

## CAUTION

**The Dexter E/H actuator contains sensitive electronics that must be protected. Drilling additional holes in the housing, electrostatically painting, or welding anywhere on the unit will damage the unit making it inoperable and will void the manufacturer's warranty. Always remove the unit from the trailer before doing any welding repair or modifications to the trailer structure.**

Connect the trailer brake lines to the actuator as follows:

1. Remove the rubber or plastic plug from the  $\frac{3}{16}$ " inverted flare brake port.
2. Brake line must be compatible with DOT 3, DOT 4, or DOT 5 brake fluid.
3. Flush existing brake system and lines with DOT 3, DOT 4, or DOT 5 brake fluid prior to connecting to the Dexter E/H unit.
4. Connect the brake line from the trailer brakes to the  $\frac{3}{16}$ " inverted flare fitting on the actuator. Do not tighten the  $\frac{3}{16}$ " brake line adapter more than the 22 Ft. Lbs. used at factory installation.

Fill the unit with DOT 3, DOT 4, or DOT 5 brake fluid to the bottom of the reservoir filler neck. When putting the filler cap back on it should be turned clockwise until snug.

## CAUTION

**Always use new DOT 3, DOT 4, or DOT 5 brake fluid from a sealed container. Never attempt to reuse old or dirty fluid. Do not overfill the unit. Take care to protect painted surfaces from contact with the brake fluid. Wash off any spilled brake fluid.**

Mount the emergency breakaway switch and emergency breakaway battery on the trailer, as detailed in the instruction sheets provided with the emergency breakaway kit.





# Electrical Installation Requirements

## CAUTION

Undersized wire will increase electrical resistance and will prevent proper operation of this unit.

### Wire Colors and Function

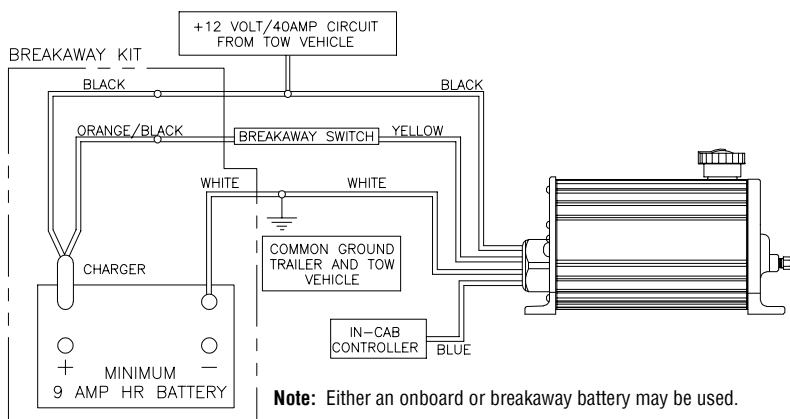
**BLACK** – 30 amp 12 volt Supply From Tow Vehicle\*

**BLUE** – Output From In-Cab Electronic Brake Controller

**WHITE** – Trailer and Tow Vehicle Ground

**YELLOW** – Cold side of breakaway switch

### Electrical Schematic



It is critical that the BLACK power lead and WHITE ground lead from the tow vehicle to the input of the actuator are sized and properly terminated (i.e. dedicated 25-40\* amp circuit on the tow vehicle – 12 gauge wire minimum). 10-gauge wire is recommended to optimize performance. Consult the SAE wiring guidelines for proper trailer electrical harness design.

\* Low temperature applications below 0° F require a 40-amp circuit.

The blue wire from the in-cab electronic brake control is connected to the blue wire on the actuator. The yellow wire from the actuator is connected to the cold side of the trailer emergency breakaway switch. **Under no circumstances should the actuator blue wire and the yellow wire be connected together, nor should the blue wire ever be grounded.**

**Requires an In-Cab Electronic Control** – The Dexter E/H actuator is intended to be used with an in-cab electronic brake controller. The unit will operate with a wide variety of controllers but provides optimum performance when used with a Dexter electronic brake controller. The in-cab controller must have an output capacity of at least 5 amps for proper operation of the Dexter E/H actuator. Although compatible, time base brake controllers are not recommended.

## **CAUTION**

**It is the responsibility of the end user to ensure that their in-cab electronic controller is compatible with the Dexter E/H actuator. Dexter Axle attempts to provide compatibility with most controllers available, but is unable to anticipate design changes that might be introduced by the various controller manufacturers.**

**Electrical Connections** – Make sure all electrical connections are clean, dry, weather tight, and secure to prevent damage to the wiring from dragging or becoming entangled with foreign objects. A dedicated ground connection between the tow vehicle and trailer is also required.

**Breakaway Battery Requirement** – To comply with federal requirements, the trailer must be equipped with a breakaway switch and battery. The breakaway battery needs to have a minimum capacity of 9 amp hours and needs to be maintained in a fully charged condition at all times. The breakaway battery should be checked for proper charge level before every use.

**Charging the Breakaway Battery** – The breakaway battery must be kept fully charged at all times in order to function properly. Use only those breakaway battery kits that include a charging device. Do not attempt to charge the breakaway battery directly from the tow vehicle without the appropriate charging device.







## Test Electrical Operation

1. Attach the trailer to the towing vehicle. Do not connect trailer plug to tow vehicle until step #2 is completed.
2. Pull the breakaway switch. The Dexter E/H unit should run. If the unit does not run, check breakaway battery condition and system wiring. Reset the breakaway switch, which will turn the unit off.

**Note:** When the unit is running, the motor will generate a “hum” that changes pitch as the unit builds pressure. This is normal.

3. Connect trailer plug to tow vehicle.
4. Turn the ignition switch on and turn the in-cab electronic brake controller on. Whenever the brake pedal is depressed, the Dexter E/H unit should run with time based controllers. Inertia type controllers will often require the vehicle to be moving in order for the Dexter E/H unit to come on by means of the brake pedal. If the unit does not run, check system wiring.
5. Apply the controller manual slide. The Dexter E/H unit should run and brake lights come on.



### CAUTION

Testing the Dexter E/H unit confirms that it is operating. It **DOES NOT** confirm that the brakes are operating properly. Regular inspection, adjustment, and maintenance of the brakes, lines, hoses, drums, discs, fluid, and other associated components is necessary to ensure proper brake operation.

6. Some brake controllers will not produce a high enough signal voltage to actuate the trailer brakes when the vehicle is at a standstill. Minimal trailer brake force is produced when the controller voltage output to the E/H actuator is at least 3 VDC. Maximum trailer brake force is achieved at 12 VDC.
7. When the tow vehicle brakes are released, the unit may continue to run for a few seconds.

## **Bleeding and Brake Adjustment**

1. It typically is much easier to bleed the brakes with two people working together.
2. Special care must be taken to insure that the Dexter E/H unit does not run out of brake fluid. Check the fluid level frequently during the bleeding process.
3. Block the wheels on the trailer and towing vehicle.
4. If the trailer is equipped with drum brakes, check that the brake running clearances are properly adjusted consistent with the trailer manufacturer's recommendations.

### **CAUTION**

**Failure to properly adjust the brakes on trailers equipped with drum brakes can result in slower response time of the Dexter E/H unit.**

5. Install plastic tubing onto the bleeder screw of the wheel cylinder/caliper.
6. Immerse the free end of the plastic tube in a clean container partially filled with brake fluid.
7. Open the bleeder screw one half turn on the wheel cylinder/caliper farthest from the Dexter E/H unit. If towed vehicle has multiple axles, always start with the rear axle first.
8. To activate the Dexter E/H unit, turn the ignition switch on and press on the brake pedal, or use manual slide.
9. Watch the free end of the bleeder hose for air bubbles escaping into the clear container. Continue to bleed the wheel cylinder/caliper until the fluid becomes clear and free of bubbles.





## **CAUTION**

**Do not run the Dexter E/H actuator without adequate brake fluid in the reservoir as it will damage the unit and void the warranty. Check all bleeder screws to ensure that they are securely closed and do not leak.**

10. Tighten the bleeder screw, turn off the Dexter E/H unit, and remove plastic tubing from the bleeder screw. Bleeding of the wheel cylinder/caliper is now complete.
11. Refill the Dexter E/H unit with brake fluid.
12. Continue the above process (steps 5 through 11) on the next farthest brake away from the actuator.
13. Repeat these steps until all the brakes have been bled.
14. New trailers with disc brakes should be bled at least twice. Any air in the brake system will cause brake delay with an E/H system.

## Testing and Adjustment of Electronic Controller Unit

1. Adjust the gain setting on the in-cab controller to a mid range setting.
2. Drive vehicle at 10 to 15 m.p.h..
3. Apply the brakes. If braking is too severe, adjust the gain setting down to decrease pressure and retest. If braking is inadequate, increase the gain setting on the in-cab electronic controller and retest.
4. Repeat this process until the brakes respond appropriately.

### CAUTION

The appropriate pressure setting will vary depending on the weight of the load being transported on the trailer, weather conditions and road conditions. The “Testing and Adjustment of Electronic Controller Unit” procedure should be repeated each time the trailer is used. Failure to properly adjust the Dexter E/H actuator may result in poor brake performance and could result in serious or fatal injuries and/or property damage.





## Troubleshooting Guide

***Unit will not run or brakes are slow to respond. To determine if the unit is functioning properly, perform the checks outlined below***

1. Verify that the trailer and tow vehicle are wired according to the electrical schematic shown in “Electrical Requirements”.
2. Re-bleed the trailer brakes. Any air in the trailer brake system causes brake delay.
3. If the trailer is equipped with drum brakes, re-adjust the drum brakes to the trailer manufacturer’s recommended running clearance.
4. Trailer wiring that is too small can cause slow response (see section on Electrical Installation Requirements).
5. Slow response can be caused by brake line restrictions. The trailer brake lines must be at least  $\frac{3}{16}$ " in diameter. Steel tubing is preferred over flexible hoses.
6. Check to see if the white ground wire runs directly to the tow vehicle ground. **IT MUST NOT BE GROUNDED TO THE TRAILER ONLY. IT IS IMPORTANT THAT THIS GROUND WIRE RUNS DIRECTLY TO THE TOW VEHICLE’S BATTERY GROUND. NO EXCEPTIONS.**
7. Detach all wires from the Dexter Axle E/H unit leaving only the blue, black, white, and yellow wires. It is important that the unit is disconnected from any other wires going to the towing vehicle or breakaway switch and breakaway battery. Failure to do so may result in a faulty test.
8. Using a 12 volt battery, connect the white wire to the negative (-) terminal of the battery.
9. Connect the black wire to the positive (+) terminal of the battery. The motor should not run. If the motor runs, the unit may be defective.
10. Leave the white wire connected to the negative (-) terminal of the battery.
11. Connect the blue and black wires together to the positive (+) terminal of the battery.
12. The motor should run and the unit should pressurize.

13. If this does not occur, the unit may be defective.
14. Leave the white wire connected to the negative (-) terminal of the battery.
15. Connect only the yellow wire to the positive (+) terminal of the battery.
16. The motor should run and the unit should pressurize.
17. If this does not occur, the unit may be defective.
18. If the unit checks OK, reconnect the wires leading to the trailer plug and repeat steps 9 through 14 at the trailer plug. If you do not get the same results as before, the problem is in the trailer wiring or the electronic brake controller.

### ***Using the breakaway system to troubleshoot a unit that is not operating correctly***

1. With a fully charged breakaway battery and trailer plug disconnected, pull the breakaway switch on the trailer.
  - a. If the unit runs and builds pressure, the breakaway system is functioning properly.
  - b. If the unit runs and builds pressure when the breakaway switch is pulled but will not function under normal operating conditions, the problem most likely is a defective in-cab controller or defective wiring between the tow vehicle and Dexter E/H actuator.
  - c. If the unit runs but will not build pressure when the breakaway switch is pulled, the Dexter E/H unit may be defective.
  - d. If the unit does not run, measure the DC voltage between the white wire and the yellow wire. If the voltage is less than 12 volts, either the breakaway switch or the breakaway wiring is defective.
2. After completing the above steps, reset the breakaway switch and reconnect the trailer plug.

### ***Trailer brakes too aggressive***

1. Reduce the gain setting on the in-cab electronic brake controller.
2. Check brake adjustment.





***Trailer brakes not aggressive enough***

1. Increase the gain setting on the in-cab electronic brake controller.
2. Check brake adjustment.

# Dexter Axle Limited Warranty

## WHAT PRODUCTS ARE COVERED

All Dexter trailer axles, suspensions, and brake control systems excluding Dexter 6000 series Manufactured Housing Axles.

## LIMITED 2 YEAR WARRANTY

Dexter Axle warrants to the original purchaser that its axles, suspension systems, and E/H hydraulic brake actuators shall be free from defects in material and workmanship for a period of two (2) years from the date of first sale of the trailer incorporating such components.

## LIMITED 5 YEAR WARRANTY

Dexter Axle warrants to the original purchaser that its Nev-R-Lube™ bearings and the suspension components only of its Torflex® axles shall be free from defects in material and workmanship for a period of five (5) years from the date of first sale of the trailer incorporating such components.

## LIMITED 7 YEAR WARRANTY

Dexter Axle warrants to the original purchaser that its Predator Series™ electric brake controllers shall be free from defects in material and workmanship for a period of seven (7) years from the date of purchase.

## EXCLUSIVE REMEDY

Dexter Axle will, at its option, repair or replace the affected components of any defective axle, repair or replace the entire defective axle, or refund the then-current list price of the axle. In all cases, a reasonable time period must be allowed for warranty repairs to be completed. Allowance will only be made for installation costs specifically approved by Dexter Axle.

## WHAT YOU MUST DO

In order to make a claim under these warranties:

1. You must be the original purchaser of the vehicle in which the Spring Suspension Axles or Torflex® Axles were originally installed.
2. You must promptly notify us within the warranty period of any defect, and provide us with the axle serial number and any substantiation which may include, but is not limited to, the return of part(s) that we may reasonably request.







3. The axles or suspensions must have been installed and maintained in accordance with good industry practice and any specific Dexter Axle recommendations, including those specified in Dexter Axle’s publication “Operation Maintenance Service Manual.”

EXCLUSIONS

These warranties do not extend to or do not cover defects caused by:

1. The connecting of brake wiring to the trailer wiring or trailer wiring to the towing vehicle wiring.
2. The attachment of the running gear to the frame.
3. Hub imbalance, or any damage caused thereby.
4. Parts not supplied by Dexter Axle.
5. Any damage whatever caused by or related to any alteration of the axle including welding supplemental brackets to the axle.
6. Use of an axle on a unit other than the unit to which it was originally mounted.
7. Normal wear and tear.
8. Alignment.
9. Improper installation.
10. Unreasonable use (including failure to provide reasonable and necessary maintenance as specified in Dexter Axle’s publication “Operation Maintenance Service Manual” including required maintenance after “Prolonged Storage”).
12. Improper wheel nut torque.
13. Cosmetic finish or corrosion.

LIMITATIONS

1. **In all cases, Dexter Axle reserves the right to fully satisfy its obligations under the Limited Warranties by refunding the then-current list price of the defective axle (or, if the axle has been discontinued, of the most nearly comparable current product).**
2. Dexter Axle reserves the right to furnish a substitute or replacement component or product in the event an axle or any component of the axle is discontinued or is otherwise unavailable.
3. These warranties are nontransferable.

GENERAL

**THE FOREGOING WARRANTIES ARE EXCLUSIVE AND IN LIEU OF ALL OTHER WARRANTIES EXCEPT THAT OF TITLE, WHETHER WRITTEN, ORAL OR IMPLIED, IN FACT OR IN LAW (INCLUDING ANY WARRANTY OF MERCHANTABILITY OR FITNESS FOR A PARTICULAR PURPOSE).**

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Inquiries regarding these warranties should be sent to:

Dexter Axle  
P.O. Box 250  
Elkhart, Indiana 46515



# Dexter Online Parts Store

From magnets and seals to complete brake and hub kits, Dexter offers a complete line of genuine replacement parts for your trailer. Most products are available in-stock and ready to ship within 24 hours direct to you from the factory. With dedicated customer support, quick turnaround and a 30-day money back guarantee, the Dexter Online Parts Store helps keep your trailer going.

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  - Suspension Components
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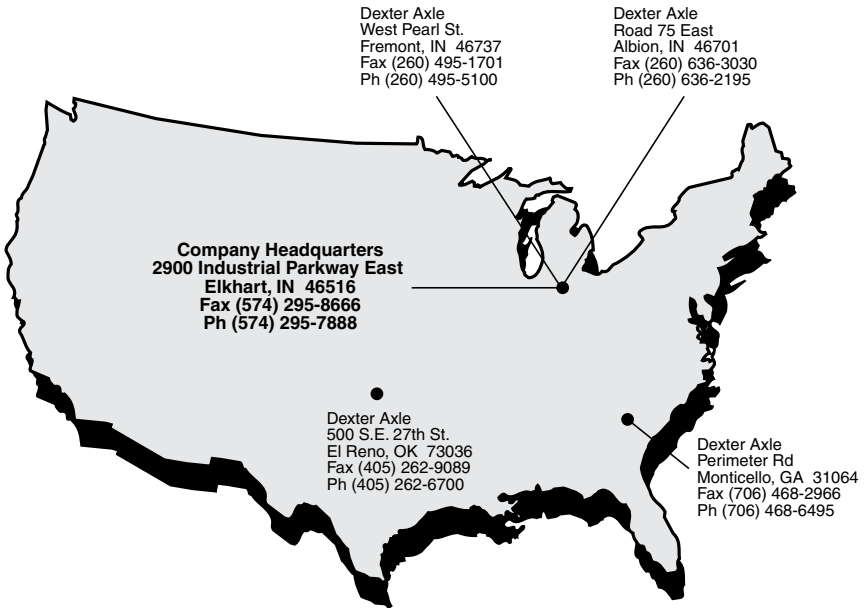
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