

"The DOT matrix reloaded"

Or I can't remember if the brake system has DOT 3, DOT 4, DOT 5 or DOT 5.1

A Quick test for the fluid in your system is that DOT 3, 4 & 5.1 will mix with water. Put a sample from your system in a jar with an equal amount of water, cover it and shake it up. After a few minutes if there is no change, it's DOT 3, DOT 4 or DOT 5.1. If the two fluids are clearly separated, then your brake fluid is DOT 5.

DOT 5 when new is usually purple but will change to an amber color when in use over time so don't rely on color alone.

DOT 5.1, DOT 4 and DOT 3 can be mixed in our older cars usually without any adverse effects but if your owner's manual calls for using DOT 4 or DOT 5.1, then definitely use it even though it is more than twice or three times the cost of DOT 3.

DOT 4 and DOT 5.1 were introduced to cope with cars mainly with all wheel disk brakes or performance braking systems due to the heat they generate. If you find yourself a bit low on fluid and it's a DOT 4 or 5.1 system, you can add DOT 3 if that's all that is available. However, you should bleed and replenish the system back to DOT 4 or 5.1 as soon as practical to insure safety on your vehicle. Too high a concentrate of DOT 3 will allow your fluid to boil and lead to complete brake failure. DOT 4 and DOT 5.1 can be mixed without too much regard as they are both high heat fluids. DOT 5.1 has a rating of 10 to 15 degrees F above DOT 4.

Never mix any other DOT rated fluid with DOT 5. DOT 3, 4 and 5.1 are glycol based fluids. DOT 5 is a silicone based fluid.

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