



A SMOOTHER RIDE

MOR/RYPDE'S RE SUSPENSION SYSTEM UPGRADE CIVILIZES THE CONSTANT JARRING THAT LEADS TO PREMATURE WEAR

by Bill and Jenn Gehr



Typical leaf-spring suspension systems leave a lot to be desired. For one, they haven't changed much since the advent of the travel trailer. To make matters worse, the roads most of us drive on are not exactly well maintained. This combination is a recipe for failure on fifth-wheel and travel-trailer frames and their contents alike. The constant jarring and damaging road shock causes accelerated wear and tear on suspension components, primarily the equalizers and shackles — not to mention our chattering teeth! To help smooth out the ride, and to reduce suspension-component wear, MOR/ryde offers the RE (rubber equalizer) suspension upgrade kit that replaces the stock center spring equalizers with rubber shear springs.

Smooth is definitely the operative word that comes to mind after adding the MOR/ryde RE System to the existing leaf springs. Not only does the rubber equalizer increase suspension travel, it also provides far greater improvement in the damping of road shock.

The RE System can be installed by one or two people in approximately six hours and requires no welding or drilling. However, we did have to grind a small groove on both sides of each spring hanger to insert the crossmember bolts. (This is not indicative of all equalizer hangers; the test fifth-wheel, a NuWa HitchHiker, simply has a wider hanger for greater load-carrying capacity.)

To facilitate the installation, the fifth-wheel was raised high enough to suspend both axles for removal of tires and wheels. For safety, we set the trailer on a sturdy set of jack stands. It's important to support the axles with some form of an adjustable floor or bottle jack prior to removal of the stock steel equalizer. This supporting jack will also allow for finite adjustments while installing the MOR/ryde equalizers.

Held in by only three bolts, the removal of the stock steel equalizer is fairly simple. However, the installation of the RE System is a bit more challenging. This is where the jacks underneath the axles really come into play. They allowed us to raise or lower the axle so the holes could be



Removal of the stock equalizer and suspension links.



Depending on rust, the bolts holding the suspension and/or links may need to be jarred loose with a hammer.



Once the equalizer is removed, discard the upper bolt and save the links for the SRE install.



Install the new SRE equalizer with the new upper bolt and existing links (replace if worn); grease bolts prior to insertion.



It's absolutely necessary to make sure all bolts are torqued to the manufacturer-recommended settings.



Use a hydraulic bottle jack to raise or lower the SRE to properly align the bolt holes.



Follow the bolt pattern listed in the instruction manual for the crossmember. Torque to spec once it's in place.



For our installation, we had to grind notches in the spring hanger in order for the crossmember bolts to fit properly.



Install and torque the crossmember bolts.



Before installing the tires, grease all bolts with zerk fittings with a high-pressure grease gun.

aligned and the bolts inserted through the suspension links into the equalizer. At this point the installer needs to be certain the suspension links have been installed correctly so the ends of the leaf springs are above the bottom of the equalizer, not below.

Once the equalizer is installed properly, the second part of the process involves bolting the two-piece crossmember to each equalizer.

The first step is to install a U-bolt at each end of the crossmember around the equalizer hanger, then bolt the two pieces together, aligning the holes and bolts to match the width of the test trailer's frame. The nuts are only snugged until the U-bolts are tightened. Final tightening follows the recommended torque settings, as stated in the instructions. Once you double check your work, the

tires and wheels can be replaced and the jack stands removed.

Our test fifth-wheel, a 32½-footer that weighs approximately 13,500 pounds, was also equipped with factory-installed shock absorbers. The tow vehicle is a 2006 Dodge Ram 2500 4WD short-bed. We used a 6-mile loop that we regularly travel to test RVs; it includes a railroad crossing, several large dips in the road and a few miles of seriously uneven freeway.

The first drive on the loop was with the factory equalizers. Even with the factory shocks, we could feel the bucking over the railroad tracks as well as on the uneven freeway. We could only imagine what it must be like inside of the trailer.

The second test drive was completed on the exact same course and at the same test

speeds, but with the RE upgrade in place. While trailer bounce was still there, the jarring force over the railroad tracks and uneven freeway were noticeably less. We still could feel the stutter bumps as the truck drove over them, but there was a marked improvement as the trailer passed over the same bumps. And the MOR/ryde system definitely smoothed out the large dips along the test route.

The RE Suspension System is unquestionably a better riding and handling upgrade well worth its \$599.95 price tag. The RE kit comes with a three-year limited warranty and the company offers expert advice for trailerists looking for application assistance. 🚚

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