



Bulletin ServiceLink



Bulletin SL5-94
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SERVICE TIPS FOR THE PROFESSIONAL TECHNICIAN

POSSIBLE UPPER BALL JOINT FAILURE 1988-94 CHEVROLET & GMC 4X4's

The upper ball joint is a follower ball joint mounted to a bar type control arm, fig. 1. The inspection standard is to look for perceptible looseness with the vehicle properly supported. Whether or not looseness is found on these suspensions further checks should be made to see if there were any contributing causes for failure other than normal wear. If there is suspension damage as described below, it may cause a problem in the future.

The suspension limiting device in the rebound direction is the shock absorber. If a longer shock absorber is installed, the bar type arm may introduce undue force on the strikeout perch and damage may result. If the strikeout perch or shock absorber are damaged in any way, or if the shock absorber allows more suspension travel than the original equipment shock, they must be restored to their original operating condition.

If a strikeout perch shows evidence of sustained contact or damage, fig 4, further investigation is required.

- Check the shock absorber for damage and for correct extended length. If the extended length is more than 16.5", the shock absorber must be replaced with a unit that meets OEM specifications.
- Measure as shown in fig. 4. With the suspension in full rebound, a vehicle with an OEM shock absorber and strikeout perch in good condition will measure 23.5" maximum from the center of the wheel to the underside of the fenderwell.
- Check that the vehicle curb height is correct.
- Check for damage to upper control arm. Note: If the above factors are not inspected or corrected, ball joint failure could result.

