



**Q:** What brake fluid do your techs use in the under the floor brake pedal assembly and what are the differences between brake fluids? What fluids are compatible with each other?

**A:** Our technicians seem to all use DOT 3, but given the following information on brake fluids, you should choose what is best for your application.

There are 4 different types of Brake Fluid; Dot 3, Dot 4, Dot 5, and Dot 5.1. These all have different wet and dry boiling points (Table A). Brake Fluid is hydroscopic, meaning it naturally absorbs moisture. Over time, that moisture can build up in your brake lines causing corrosion. You can reclaim your old S-10 brake lines, but just because they look almost new on the outside, does not mean that they look the same on the inside.

<b>Table A</b>	Dry Boiling Temp	Wet Boiling Temp
Dot 3	401 degrees F	284 degrees F
Dot 4	446 degrees F	311 degrees F
Dot 5	500 degrees F	356 degrees F
Dot 5.1	518 degrees F	374 degrees F

### Dot 3

Dot 3 brake fluid is the most common type of fluid that is used in most domestic cars and trucks. It has a dry boiling temp of 401 degrees Fahrenheit and a Wet Boiling Temp of 284 degrees Fahrenheit. Dot 3 can absorb up to 2% of its volume in moisture every year.

### Dot 4

Dot 4 is also used by many vehicles, but it has a higher boiling point than Dot 3, and it does not absorb moisture as quickly. It is interchangeable with Dot 3, but it is always best to never mix different brake fluids. Stick with one or the other. Dot 4 is generally preferred for Street Rod and High Performance applications due to its higher boiling point.

### Dot 5

Dot 5 brake fluid is silicone-based and is often referred to as a synthetic brake fluid, meaning it does not absorb moisture. DOT 5 CANNOT BE MIXED WITH ANY OTHER BRAKE FLUIDS. Another draw back is that they expand more when they are compressed, which can make a pedal feel spongy. This type of brake fluid is not as corrosive on paint as most other brake fluids due to its synthetic make-up.

### Dot 5.1

This is a non-silicon-based fluid that has a boiling point over 500 degrees, the highest of the brake fluids we've talked about so far. This can be mixed with Dot 3 and Dot 4, but again, it is recommended that you stick with one type of brake fluid. This is mainly used for severe duty and high performance applications.