

Here is a progression showing legal part-writing of all three forms in which second inversion chords happen in tonal music.

The passing 6/4: note that the bass moves by step INTO and AWAY from the second inversion dominant. Is this a progressive or retrogressive motion away from tonic? Notice that the leading tone resolves as the leading tone harmonized with a dominant always will. Notice that this progression resolves to a first inversion tonic chord.

B-flat major:

I IV^{6/4} I V^{6/4} I⁶ vi V^{8/6/4} I

The pedal 6/4: note that the bass is static. The third scale degree and the fifth scale degree of the tonic triad ascend and then descend back by step. The chord in the middle is a second inversion subdominant chord. Notice that this progression resolves to a root position tonic chord.

While the passing 6/4 happens once and awhile and the pedal 6/4 happens once and awhile, the cadential 6/4 occurs very often at cadences. This 6/4 is expanded to an 8/6/4. Notice that the 8-7 motion occurs in the alto; the 6-5 motion occurs in the tenor; the 4-3 motion occurs in the soprano. Why is there no accidental by the 3 like there has been in several other examples? Notice that the dominant seventh chord emerges on the SECOND beat of this progression.