



DOT Auto Safety Hotline

FOR AGENCY USE ONLY 100147

U.S. Department of Transportation
National Highway Traffic Safety Administration

Vehicle Owner's Questionnaire
To Report Vehicle Safety Defects
1-888-DASH-2-DOT
(1-888-327-4236)
INTERNET: www.nhtsa.dot.gov/hotline

Date Reported: FEB 25 2003 7:11

Repository

Reference No. 10006184

OWNER INFORMATION (Type or Print)

Name: [Redacted]
Address: [Redacted]
City: LUSBY State: MD Zip Code: [Redacted]

OFFICE OF DEFECTS INVESTIGATION
Daytime Telephone Number: [Redacted] - Am
Evening Telephone Number: [Redacted] - wk

Do you authorize NHTSA to provide a copy of this report to the manufacturer of your vehicle? YES NO
In the absence of [Redacted] name or address to the vehicle manufacturer.
Signature of Owner: [Redacted] Date: 2/3/03

VEHICLE INFORMATION

4JGAB54EB1A2ZZ2228 MERCEDES BENZ ML320 2001
Date Purchased: 11-2000 Dealer's Name and Telephone Number: EURO Mercedes Benz
Original Owner: [checked] Dealer's City: Bethesda State: MD Zip Code: [Redacted]
Transmission Type: [checked] Antilock Brakes [checked] Cruise Control Powertrain: [Redacted]
Vehicle Component Code: D10000 STEERING Multiple Failure: [Redacted]

FAILED COMPONENT(S)/PART(S) INFORMATION

Incident Date(s): 28-JAN-2003 Failure Mileage: [Redacted] Failure Speed: [Redacted]

ADDITIONAL ITEMS TO BE COMPLETED WHEN REPORTING A TIRE FAILURE

Tire Make: [Redacted] Tire Model (Name or Number): [Redacted] Tire Size (Example P215/65R15): [Redacted]
DOT No. (Example: DOTM1A9ABC036): [Redacted] Original Equipment Prior Repair: Failure Location: [Redacted]
Tire Component Code: [Redacted] Tire Failure Type: [Redacted]

ADDITIONAL ITEMS TO BE COMPLETED WHEN REPORTING A CHILD SEAT FAILURE

Make: [Redacted] Date Manufactured: [Redacted] Model No./Name: [Redacted]
Seat Type: [Redacted] Installation System: [Redacted]
Child Seat Component Code: [Redacted] Failed Part: [Redacted]

APPLICABLE INCIDENT INFORMATION

(Please describe in detail the incident(s), failure(s), crash(es), and injury(ies).)
Crash: Yes No Fire: Yes No
Number of Persons Injured: [Redacted] Number of Deaths: [Redacted] Reported to Police: N

Narrative Description of Incident(s), Crash(es), and Injury(ies).
Please describe (1) events leading up to the failure, (2) failure and its consequences, and (3) what was done to correct the failure; i.e., parts repaired or replaced (and if old part is available).

THE VEHICLE STEERING WHEEL LOCKS UP. DEALER HAS BEEN NOTIFIED. PH The clamp on the power steering hose came off. The power steering fluid leaked from the SUV. The clamp was malfunction and wasn't design to serve it's purpose. Mercedes-Benz re-designed the clamp and didn't do a re-call. Several ML320 experience the problem. See attached bill & letter to Mercedes.

Include, if available: Police/Fire Department Report, Photos, and Repair Invoice. ATTACH ADDITIONAL SHEETS IF NECESSARY.

The Privacy Act of 1974 (Public Law 93-595) This information is requested pursuant to authority vested in the National Highway Traffic Safety Act and subsequent amendments. You are under no obligation to respond to this questionnaire. Your response may be used to assist the NHTSA in determining whether a manufacturer should take appropriate action to correct a safety defect. If the NHTSA proceeds with administrative enforcement or litigation against a manufacturer, your response, or a statistical summary thereof, may be used in support of the agency's action.

[REDACTED]
Lusby, Maryland [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] work
[REDACTED] home

February 13, 2003

Re: 2001 Mercedes-Benz ML320
Vehicle ID Number: 4JGAB54E81A222228

On January 28, 2003, I experienced a problem with my ML320. The steering wheel wasn't turning and the SUV was making a strange noise. This occurred at 4:50 a.m., when I was attempting to use my car to go to work. I contacted Roadside Assistance and spoke to Rick, a customer service representative, who instructed me to contact the dealer when they open.

I contacted Mercedes-Benz of Annapolis to arrange to have the SUV towed to their location. I clearly explained what had happen and that there was oil on the driveway from under the SUV. I spoke to Jenny, who informed me that a clamp had come off of a hose. She stated that a road technician could come to my home and make the repair. I was concerned that one could diagnosis the problem without inspecting the vehicle and that it could be fixed at my residence. I thought there was a major problem with the steering or tire rods. She stated that with the ML320, this could happen and that the clamp needed to be replace.

A technician came to my residence and made the repair very quickly. He was very professional and fully explained what had happen. He showed me the clamp that was removed from the vehicle. I was informed that Mercedes-Benz had changed the design of the clamp for the ML320, because it was not providing the required function that was needed. The clamp was for the power steering hose. Since there was a malfunction in the clamp and it couldn't stay tight on the hose, the power steering fluid leaked from the SUV. He stated that this has been an on going problem with the ML320 model and Mercedes-Benz re-designed the clamp with inside grids to stay secure.

Several ML320 have experienced the same problem and even staff members who own the SUV. A problem of this magnitude should have generated a recall for that model. If one can't turn their steering wheel, this can cause an accident. It was very frighten for me to think what could have happen to me on 01-28. I travel on the beltway everyday and to lose power steering fluid can be deadly. Even if I wasn't the driver, I could be driving next to a ML320 and that person could run into me.

Mercedes-Benz should have informed it's customers of the malfunction and had the clamp replace. As much as I bring my vehicle in for scheduled services, your company should have replaced the clamp and brought the issue to my attention. Being proactive is a much better measure of safety than being concern about the company's reputation or cost to replace. Your consumer's safety should be the number one factor, when it comes to your product.

Will it take the lost of one's life or a Class Action Suit to have your company realize the impact of this problem? When Mercedes-Benz communicated the wrong type of oil to use in the SUV and a Class Action Suit was filed, your company knew how to send correspondence to make everyone aware. I'm not at all pleased with Mercedes-Benz, because I have placed my life in your vehicle and you don't care enough to protect us, when you are fully aware that there has been numerous ML320 that required power steering clamp replacements.

I had to miss a day from work and pay \$72.70. Your customers are paying for replacements of malfunction parts, which is not good business practice. I don't feel I should pay for your growing problems of your new vehicles. The charge should have been absorbed by Mercedes-Benz. This has been a very big inconvenience financially and wasted time from work.

Enclosed is a copy of the invoice, which notes the service rendered and the amount charged. It would be greatly appreciated, if you would review this matter and return a favorable outcome concerning the amount I had to pay and all of your other customers who aren't aware of the problem. I have brought this matter to the attention of Consumer Product Safety Commission and US Department of Transportation. If the volces of your customers can't make a difference, maybe these organizations can.

Respectfully,

cc: Consumer Product Safety Commission
US Department of Transportation

**THE ATTACHMENTS TO THIS
DOCUMENT HAVE BEEN REMOVED
TO PROTECT UNWARRANTED
INVASION OF PERSONAL PRIVACY
PURSUANT TO EXEMPTION 6 OF
THE FREEDOM OF INFORMATION
ACT (FOIA), 5 U.S.C. 552(b)(6).**