



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

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

FOR AGENCY USE ONLY 335

Date Received

Repository ☐

NOV 22 2003 12:55

Reference No.
10040317

OWNER INFORMATION (Type or Print)

Name

Address

City

ST. CLOUD

State

MI

Zip Code

Daytime Telephone Number

E-mail Address

Evening Telephone Number

Do you authorize NHTSA to provide information to the manufacturer of your vehicle? ☒ YES ☐ NO
In the absence of an authorization, please your name or address to the vehicle manufacturer.
Signature of Owner _____ Date 12/18/03

VEHICLE INFORMATION

17 digit Vehicle Identification Number Located at bottom of windshield on driver's side

WDEP178J21A012324

Make

MERCEDES BENZ

Model

600

Model Year

2001

Date Purchased
4/22/03

Dealer's Name and Telephone Number
MAGIC IMPORTS / 214-94-4392

Engine:
No. Cylinders

12

Fuel Type:

Gasoline

Original Owner
☒ NO

Dealer's City

State

Zip Code

Transmission Type

☒ Antilock Brakes

Powertrain

☒ Cruise Control

Vehicle Component Code

18000 VEHICLE SPEED CONTROL; CRUISE CONTROL

Multiple Failure: 1

FAILED COMPONENT(S)/PART(S) INFORMATION

Incident Date(s)

Failure Mileage

Failure Speed

ADDITIONAL ITEMS TO BE COMPLETED WHEN REPORTING A TIRE FAILURE

Tire Make

Tire Model (Name or Number)

Tire Size (Example P215/65R16)

DOT No. (Example: DOTM15ABC036)

☐ Original Equipment
☐ Prior Repair

Failure Location:

Tire Component Code

Tire Failure Type

ADDITIONAL ITEMS TO BE COMPLETED WHEN REPORTING A CHILD SEAT FAILURE

Make:

Date Manufactured:

Model No./Name:

Seat Type:

Installation System:

Child Seat Component Code:

Failed Part:

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

Number of Deaths

Reported to Police

9

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).

WHILE DRIVING VEHICLE SPEED CONTROL STOPS ON ITS OWN. THERE IS NO WARNING. *AK

See attached letter.

Include, if available: Police/Fire Department Report, Photos, and Repair Invoice.

ATTACH ADDITIONAL SHEETS IF NECESSARY

The Privacy Act of 1974 (Public Law 93-579) 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.

Narrative Description of Incident(s), Failure(s), Crash(es), and Injury(ies)



U.S. DEPT. OF TRANSPORTATION

COLLEGEVILLE, PA

U.S.A.

ATTACH ADDITIONAL SHEETS IF NECESSARY

U.S. Department
of Transportation

National Highway
Traffic Safety
Administration

400 Seventh St., S.W.
Washington, D.C. 20590

Official Business
Penalty for Private Use \$300

BUSINESS REPLY MAIL

FIRST CLASS PERMIT NO 73173 WASHINGTON, D.C.

POSTAGE WILL BE PAID BY NATL. HWY. TRAFFIC SAFETY ADMIN.

U.S. Department of Transportation
National Highway Traffic Safety Administration
Office of Defects Investigation, NVS-216
400 7th Street, SW
Washington, DC 20590

NO POSTAGE
NECESSARY
IF MAILED
IN THE
UNITED STATES

**VEHICLE
OWNER'S
QUESTIONNAIRE**



DOT AUTO SAFETY HOTLINE

TO REPORT VEHICLE SAFETY DEFECTS
COMPLETE THIS FORM

OR

DASH2DOT

and dial toll free at

1-888-DASH-2-DOT

1-888-327-4236

DOT Auto Safety Hotline
(DASH) 2 DOT



U.S. Department of Transportation
National Highway Traffic Safety
Administration
Informational and guidance

Saint Joseph, MN

CSB/SJU

DEPARTMENT OF MUSIC

Collegeville, MN

U.S. Department of Transportation
National Highway Traffic Safety

St. Cloud, October 13, 2003

Dear Sir/Madam,

In response to your request for details related to safety:
I bought the 2001 Mercedes Benz CL 600 with 32500 miles in Dallas, TX on April 24th, 2003. The car was and still is under factory warranty.
I reported in early May to the dealer - Feldmann's Imports in Minneapolis, MN - (1-800-877-3700) that the cruise control suddenly disengages and have repeated that concern many times since. It is still not fixed.

This car has been a headache almost from day one even though the dealer's service record showed nothing unusual and the car-fax report was clean when I bought it.

My main concerns are the following:

1. Cruise control after four months still not fixed (suddenly and sporadically disengages);
2. Windows blowing open at highway speed -
3. Active Body Control not functioning most of the time (the factory cautions against exceeding 50 MPH)
4. Defective ABC often NOT showing up in the Memory so it cannot be fixed. Dangerous because it is sometimes hard to know if the ABC is working or not (it suddenly becomes defective) so I do not really know when it is safe to drive faster than 50 MPH.
5. A host of other problems (e.g. display not functioning; a "gremlin" disabling the turn signals etc)
6. I bought the car in end April 2003 and have hardly been able to drive it without dangerous problems. Many of the 8000 miles I have driven it were bringing from Texas to Minnesota and countless trips to the dealer in Minneapolis (150 miles roundtrip) to have the problem diagnosed, back to St. Cloud to wait for the parts to come in, back to Minneapolis and so on.

MAJOR PERIOD OF INOPERATION:

June 24 till August 14th (the engine coils were NOT available in the U.S. and were on backorder from Germany)

September 8-12

September 13th till now, October 13th.

The car is still not fixed as of this writing.

The dealer is trying hard, constantly replacing parts, but unable to diagnose the real problem;

The factory representative (Geoff Lewis who was notified several months ago that this car had serious problems) only showing up early October;

The parts are again - as in June through middle August - not available in the U.S. and need to be ordered from Germany.

Summing up:

This car, which I bought at considerable expense (a retirement present to myself for 40+ years of teaching) is:

- A. Dangerous
- B. Lacks qualified technicians at an authorized dealer who have been trained to diagnose and repair something this complicated
- C. The car is sold here in the U.S. but essential parts are not available in the U.S.
- D. Items B and C combined make it, in my opinion, obvious that no late model CL 600's are fit to be sold in this country.

Further details:

I reported the first defects in early May to the dealer in Minneapolis. Ia. that the cruise control would suddenly cut out

The car was totally inoperable from June 23 till August 14th. Parts had to be ordered from Germany and didn't arrive until August.

The day after I picked it up (August 18th) the ABC (Active body Control) light went on - I thought it was a quirk. A week later the same warning: I felt the car no longer performing properly - as if the shocks were defective - back to the dealer on September 5th for a quick diagnostics; the car's "memory" did NOT show any ABC malfunction.

Back on September 8th to the dealer's; picked it up on September 12th for a trip to Chicago - 500 miles one way -(the only blissful time I have had since returning from Texas).

On the return trip:

ABC warning on again, then in breathtaking sequens: "display malfunctioning, brake light out, brake-lining thin, fuel gauge on empty (just had it filled), cruise control cuts out.

All of a sudden a hurricane blew through the car - managed to turn on the hazard lights and coast the car to the shoulder - display: "trunk open", checked: the trunk was closed; back in the car realized that the driver's side window had blown open - back on the road: turn signal not working, indication that the stoplight was out etc.

Took it to a carwash where water gushed in through the passenger side of the vehicle even though the windows were closed. (Damaged my wheels in my hurry to rush out of there before the next wash cycle.)

Had to make a fast 40 mile trip the next day: Warnings: left door open; right door open, trunk open, lights flashing along the trunk...

BUT the turn signal worked again!

Apprised the dealer the very next workday: Monday September 15th. Was promised (again!) that a Mr. [REDACTED] would inspect the car (made it clear I did not think the local mechanic - however willing and concerned - was a match for this demon - requested again that the factory "please" take this car back). Service Mgr at Feldmann's insists that I bring the car there to "let them have it". Needed to get it jump-started twice (the first time it happened the service manager opined that I had turned on the fog-lights - we are all grabbing at straws!) and two weeks later the mechanic still couldn't find what drew the battery down! . I again reiterated that the car needed to be shipped to Germany or seen by a technician from there -etc: all to no avail) on September 22nd.

On October 2nd am informed (with an apology for not having kept me more abreast of the situation): "FOUND REAR SAM (FUSE BOX) WITH

CORROSION/ALONG WITH WIRING HARNESS, CAR WILL NEED REAR SAM AND BODY HARNESS (THIS IS A RATHER BIG REPAIR AND GEOFF LEWIS FROM MB WILL BE IN TODAY AND I WANT HIM TO INSPECT CAR/HAVE TO ORDER MORE PARTS).

On Friday October 3rd (almost three weeks after September 15th's promise of an inspection by a representative from Mercedes) Mr. [REDACTED] shows up to inspect the car; here is the next e-mail: "...HAVE ADDITIONAL PARTS ORDERED/GEOFF LEWIS INSPECTED CAR/WANTGS US TO REPLACE PLUG ENDS AND CONTROL UNIT ONLY/NOT NECESSARY TO REPLACE HARNESS/I AGREE/HOPE TO HAVE THE CAR DONE BY FIRST PART OF NEXT WEEK WILL KEEP YOU POSTED".

Next e-mail:

"THE CONNECTORS ARE COMING FROM GERMANY/EXPECT THOSE ON WEDNESDAY/THURSDAY OF NEXT WEEK PROBABLY NOT (ready)".

Any recourse you can offer will be appreciated.

Sincerely,

P.S. As of this date (October 13th) the car is still at dealer; not fixed.