

2006 MAY -4

Carlsbad CA

April 20, 2006

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Mercedes-Benz USA LLC
Client Assistance Center
One Mercedes Drive
Montvale NJ 07645-0350

Re: Mercedes-Benz '01 E320 VIN:WDBJF65JX1B
Wheel bearing failure

Sirs:

This vehicle was purchased new from Hoehn Mercedes-Benz, Carlsbad CA, on July 27, 2001. It now has about 55,000 miles on the odometer. It has been serviced at this dealership in accordance with the specified service schedule. It has been a pariah since day one. A partial list of repairs/replacements includes instrument cluster (3 times), fuel level sensor, oil level sensor, A/C control and regulators (3 times), steering lock and key (car towed to dealership, 10-day wait for parts), right headlight assembly, and both catalytic converters. Fortunately these repairs were covered under warranty. I had hoped that the bad days were behind us but recently without warning the right rear window dropped into the door (new regulator and window, \$312, - one down, three to go?).

When leaving the dealership on March 27 after the window repair I noticed a slight scraping sound coming from the left front. This got progressively worse until the car became undriveable a few blocks from the dealership. I also noticed some pulling to the right. After a AAA tow to the dealership I was told that the car needed new bearings on both front wheels and a new left spindle and rotor and brake pads (\$1421). I realize that there is no connection between window glass and wheel bearings so this must be just an unfortunate coincidence. The service advisor could offer only that this was "just one of those things". This happened two days before I left on a three-week trip to Asia so I had to make arrangements to have the car retrieved from the dealership by a third party and I had no opportunity to inspect the damaged parts or to discuss the issue further with the dealership. I have only just returned from that trip which accounts for the delay in writing.

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If indeed this is "just one of those things", then an immediate recall of this model for wheel-bearing inspection/repair is warranted because such a failure on the highway could be catastrophic. More likely, the wheel bearings were not reinstalled properly when the car had both front brake rotors and pads replaced a month earlier (second set of rotors, third set of pads). In either case, I should not be liable for the cost of these repairs.

Given the experience with this vehicle and the continuing saga of problems (lately the car has been idling roughly, but since performance and mileage have not been affected I have been afraid to delve further into this issue), in addition to reimbursement for the cost of the repairs, I request either a buy-back under California's lemon law or at least a warranty extension to 100,000 miles. Surely Mercedes can match Kia and Hyundai? I hope to hear from you within 30 days before taking further action.

This is the second Mercedes that I have owned -- the first was a beautiful '54 220 convertible -- so to say that all in all I have been disappointed with the car is an understatement but I now begin to understand why Consumer's Union rated the model unacceptable. This is unfortunate because basically the E320 is a good automobile; performance and handling are very good and the safety features are reassuring. It's just this particular car that seems to be a lemon. I had expected better reliability. I hope this car won't be my last Mercedes.

Sincerely,

CC:

Bill Hoehn
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