

CL-10264001-1678

Jackson, Norris CTR (NHTSA)

From: Reid, Randy (NHTSA)
Sent: Tuesday, June 09, 2009 3:24 PM
To: Jackson, Norris CTR (NHTSA)
Subject: FW: Complainant response needed

Norris, please assign this complaint to a writer for a response.

From: Noel, Andrea (NHTSA)
Sent: Tuesday, June 09, 2009 2:53 PM
To: Reid, Randy (NHTSA)
Subject: Complainant response needed

Randy,

Please review the emails below for my response to this consumer's concerns and, in turn, his response to me. The ODI # for his complaint is 10264001 and the verbatim of the complaint is as follows:

"TL*THE CONTACT OWNS A 1999 MERCEDES BENZ ML430. WHILE DRIVING IN REVERSE AND FORWARD AT 25 MPH, THE CONTACT HEARD A CLICKING SOUND UNDERNEATH THE CENTER OF THE VEHICLE. SHE ASSUMED SOMETHING WAS LOOSE UNDER THE VEHICLE AND DROVE TO THE DEALER. THE DEALER NOTICED THAT THE FRONT DRIVESHAFT BEARING WAS LOOSE. AFTER REPAIRING THE SHAFT, THE DEALER DISCOVERED THAT THE TRANSFER CASE WAS ALSO CAUSING THE ISSUE. THE CONTACT FEELS THAT THE MANUFACTURER SHOULD REPAIR THE VEHICLE BECAUSE THE OWNER'S MANUAL DOES NOT STATE ANYTHING ABOUT REPAIRING THE TRANSFER CASE. THE VEHICLE IS CURRENTLY BEING REPAIRED. THE CURRENT MILEAGE WAS 115,000 AND FAILURE MILEAGE WAS 85,000. UPDATED 04/13/09.*JB"

If you need more information please let me know.

Thanks,

Andrea A. Noel
Safety Defects Engineer
National Highway Traffic Safety Administration
Office of Defects Investigation
1200 New Jersey Ave. SE
W48-221, NVS-213
Washington, DC 20590
Tel: 202-493-0210
Fax: 202-366-1767
E-mail: andrea.noel@dot.gov

From: [REDACTED]
Sent: Monday, June 08, 2009 12:57 PM
To: Noel, Andrea (NHTSA)
Subject: Re: Benz ML430

Hi Andrea:

I had consulted with licensed mechanics who worked for Ben dealer in Nevada State and also the local dealers', they all said the same thing about the ML430 1999/2000 transfer case problem, did you

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investigae in that directions? I thought I provided these information in my previous emails to you, will you help to look into it.

Time elapsed almost 10 years from the model year of ML430, less customers would complain and your "database" would not collect significant complaints indeed. If you contact those resources that I mentioned in above, you will find out the truth.

Did you question Mercedes Ben USA? Please ask they to provide you the reasonable explanation of the cause. My parts been shipped back to New Jersey factory and never get known what's going on???

From: "Andrea.Noel@dot.gov" <Andrea.Noel@dot.gov>

To: [REDACTED]

Sent: Monday, June 8, 2009 5:16:07 AM

Subject: RE: Benz ML430

[REDACTED]

My apologies for the delay in getting in contact with you, I had been out of the country for a couple of weeks. My search on the nature of your complaint did not produce any similar complaints, investigations or alleged defects as you have described to me. At this time I will continue to monitor our databases but I can not establish any possible trends or similarities of complaints in this matter. If you have any further questions please do not hesitate to contact me.

Andrea A. Noel
Safety Defects Engineer
National Highway Traffic Safety Administration
Office of Defects Investigation
1200 New Jersey Ave. SE
W48-221, NVS-213
Washington, DC 20590
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Fax: 202-366-1767
E-mail: andrea.noel@dot.gov

From: [REDACTED]

Sent: Friday, May 15, 2009 9:08 PM

To: Noel, Andrea (NHTSA)

Subject: Re: Benz ML430

Hi Andrea:

I was wondering that if you have any clue by now about this defect case?

Regards,

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From: "Andrea.Noel@dot.gov" <Andrea.Noel@dot.gov>
To: [REDACTED]
Sent: Thursday, April 30, 2009 10:12:29 AM
Subject: RE: Benz ML430

Thank you for this information I will go over what you have sent and search our databases for any other possible complaints similar to your own and will get back with you soon on my findings. If you have anymore questions or concerns do not hesitate to contact me.

Thanks again,

Andrea A. Noel
Safety Defects Engineer
National Highway Traffic Safety Administration
Office of Defects Investigation
1200 New Jersey Ave. SE
W48-221, NVS-213
Washington, DC 20590
Tel: 202-493-0210
Fax: 202-366-1767
E-mail: andrea.noel@dot.gov

From: [REDACTED]
Sent: Thursday, April 30, 2009 2:57 AM
To: Noel, Andrea <NHTSA>
Subject: Benz ML430

Hi Andrea:

Thanks you for contacting me today regarding my ML430, VIN#4JGAB72E1XA [REDACTED], transfer case defecting issue.

I've compiled two files for your refernce.

1) The feedback in .ppt file from public website. <http://www.benzforum.com/forum/private.php?s=&pp=&folderid=0>

2) The answer in .doc file from a licensed Mercedes Benz technician.
<http://www.justanswer.com/questions/1yuf7-dear-sir-great-pleasure-email>

3) The photo of replaced transfer case in box to be shipped back to MBUSA

The clicking sound from my 1999 ML430 vehicle is a mystery! It started with miss-gearred at stop-to-go shift many years back. Mercedes Benz USA can't explain the cause neither to advise the consequence. My car was restrained in dealership for a new transfer case replacement which gave me no choice but to pay the service cost \$3850. I've talked to the service personnel from two separate dealership and the on-line "JustAnswer" licensed technician about the transfer case issue. Their answers indicate that it is a known problem for 1998 and 1999 ML430 models. This coherent response is quite shocking to me for a such inherent part!

My old transfer case of the vehicle had been requested for shipping back to MBUSA in New Jersey . I've

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been told that they want to look at but I've never received any answers from MBUSA about the "cause"? Why MBUSA wants to keep it?

There are many other victims experienced the same problem and somehow been fixed at vehicle owner's cost(I guess)? Why MBUSA demands the transfer case replacement instead of fixing the bad parts? Is it related to safety issue in which way? If I skipped the fix of such clicking sound, what will be the consequence? Why should I (we) pay such huge cost for a clicking sound fix?

Please feel free to contact me for any additional questions.

Best regard,

[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
Los Altos, CA [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] cell

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