



U.S. Department
of Transportation

**National Highway
Traffic Safety
Administration**

ODI RESUME

Investigation: PE 13-026
Date Opened: 07/11/2013
Investigator: Evan Frings
Approver: Frank Borris
Subject: Loss of rear tail light functionality

Date Closed: 12/30/2013
Reviewer: Scott Yon

MANUFACTURER & PRODUCT INFORMATION

Manufacturer: Mercedes-Benz USA, LLC.
Products: 2008-2009 Mercedes Benz C-Class
Population: 218,000

Problem Description: Consumers allege a loss of one or more rear lamp assemblies possibly due to an overheated electrical connector that, in some cases, resulted in melting, smoke, or a fire.

FAILURE REPORT SUMMARY

	ODI	Manufacturer	Total
Complaints:	114	291	402**
Crashes/Fires:	3	2	5
Injury Incidents:	1	0	1
Number of Injuries:	1	0	1
Fatality Incidents:	0	0	0
Other*:	0	23,534	23,534

***Description of Other:** Warranty claims reported by Mercedes Benz (as of September 2013) which may relate to the alleged defect.

** Total eliminates duplicates received by ODI and manufacturer.

ACTION / SUMMARY INFORMATION

Action: This preliminary evaluation has been upgraded to EA13-008.

Summary:

ODI initially received 21 reports of rear light assembly failure due to a melted electrical connector or housing. Since opening the initial , ODI has received a total of 114 complaints reflecting an ongoing and increasing trend. In each report, one or both rear light assemblies fail completely (i.e., all lights housed within the assembly extinguish, including the stop, tail, and turn signal functions) when the electrical ground connection is compromised as a result of high resistance and subsequent thermal over-heating. According to Mercedes-Benz, the over-heating of the ground wire is caused by corrosion between the connectors in the ground circuit to the tail light. ODI is aware of a total of 5 reports alleging fire including one injury allegation as a result of this issue. Analysis of subject vehicle complaint data indicates an increased likelihood of failure as the vehicles age.

As a result of the evidence presented, this investigation has been upgraded to EA13-008.

The ODI reports cited above can be reviewed at <http://www-odi.nhtsa.dot.gov/owners/SearchNHTSAID> under the following identification (ODI) numbers:

10466181, 10475771, 10479913, 10489338, 10498161, 10499828, 10502606, 10505806, 10508108, 10509272, 10509639, 10511017, 10511033, 10513304, 10513735, 10514998, 10519533, 10519714, 10520672, 10523816, 10524819, 10524849, 10524856, 10524886, 10524967, 10524991, 10524992, 10525010, 10525026, 10525060, 10525099, 10525105, 10525174, 10525200, 10525264, 10525299, 10525312, 10525335, 10525367, 10525416, 10525429, 10525528, 10525551, 10525692, 10525818, 10531638, 10531718, 10531751, 10531757, 10531821, 10531930, 10532083, 10532317, 10532677, 10533409, 10533697, 10533792, 10533895, 10534352, 10534430, 10534513, 10535018, 10535128, 10535240, 10535414, 10535874, 10535880, 10535999, 10536346, 10536684, 10537224, 10537717, 10537746, 10537999, 10538329, 10538533, 10541792, 10542284, 10542549, 10542566, 10542994, 10544138, 10544663, 10544839, 10545332, 10546745, 10547177, 10547369, 10547471, 10548145, 10548646, 10548994, 10549003, 10549908, 10550608, 10550717, 10551423, 10551735, 10551868, 10551897, 10552144, 10552501, 10552645, 10552989, 10553096, 10553796, 10553842, 10554996, 10555888, 10556003, 10556136, 10556248.