



Mercedes-Benz

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OFFICE OF
DEFECTS INVESTIGATION
SENT VIA FAX
202-366-8065

Mercedes-Benz USA, LLC
A DaimlerChrysler Company

March 26, 2003

03V-121 ①of④

Kenneth N. Weinstein
National Highway Traffic Safety Administration
400 Seventh Street, S.W. (NSA-01)
Washington, D.C. 20590

Re: Part 573 Defect Information Report

Dear Mr. Weinstein:

Pursuant to the requirements of 49 C.F.R. Part 573, and on behalf of Mercedes-Benz U.S. International, Inc. (MBUSI) and our parent company, DaimlerChrysler AG (DCAG), this letter advises you of a safety related defect in certain Mercedes-Benz vehicles. Specifically, Mercedes-Benz USA, LLC (MBUSA) submits this report regarding a defective condition in the power steering fluid cooling hose clamps of approximately 211,000 model year 1998-2003 M-Class vehicles.

573.5(c)(1): Manufacturer's Name

Mercedes-Benz U.S. International, Inc.
Under Contract for DaimlerChrysler AG

Designated Agent: Mercedes-Benz USA, LLC
Montvale, NJ 07645



573.5(c)(2): Identification of Vehicles

Make	Line	Model Year	Inclusive Dates of Manufacture
Mercedes-Benz	M-Class	1998-2003	May 1998 - December 2002

573.5(c)(3): Total Number of Vehicles Potentially Containing the Defect

Approximately 211,000 vehicles are potentially affected. These "subject vehicles" include MY 1998-2003 M-Class vehicles produced between May 1998 and December 2002.

573.5(c)(4): Percentage of Vehicles Estimated to Actually Contain the Defect

It is estimated that approximately 100% of the subject vehicles described above contain the condition described below.

573.5(c)(5): Description of Defect

MBUSI has determined that the hose clamp used to secure the power steering fluid cooling hose to the power steering fluid cooler may not provide sufficient clamping force for this connection. The loss of power steering fluid may result in diminished power steering over time and ultimately can damage the power steering pump.

573.5(c)(6): Chronology of Principal Events

In 2002, MBUSA identified an issue regarding the clamping force of power steering hose clamps and the loss of power steering fluid in the field. On June 12, 2002, MBUSA issued a Dealer Technical Bulletin (DTB) regarding the need to replace the hose clamp on vehicles presenting power steering fluid leaks. MBUSA records contain no indication of any accidents, injuries or property damage claims caused by this condition. In addition, testing has confirmed that fluid loss is not likely to result in contact with hot engine components. Based on approximately 336 power steering-related calls to its Customer Assistance Center that could relate to the

subject condition, MBUSA has determined that the DTB is not reducing the incidence of power steering fluid loss at an acceptable rate through field repairs. Accordingly, MBUSA has decided to initiate this safety campaign to expedite this repair on all subject vehicles.

573.5(c)(8): Remedy Program

MBUSA will conduct a voluntary recall campaign for the subject M-Class vehicles. The recall will be conducted in order to install a new hose clamp on the power steering hose to the power steering cooler of subject vehicles. During clamp replacement, the power steering cooling hose will be inspected and replaced as necessary. In addition to the reimbursement for any costs incurred by owners to repair this condition, MBUSA will reimburse customers for all consequential costs reasonably and necessarily incurred as the result of a breakdown rendering the vehicle inoperable or unsafe due to power steering failure. This includes reimbursement for towing, lodging, food and travel expenses actually, reasonably and necessarily incurred. MBUSA will also provide a loaner vehicle from the Mercedes-Benz dealership performing the repairs while the repairs are performed or rental vehicle if a loaner is unavailable. This is all part of Mercedes-Benz's continuing commitment to ensure the complete satisfaction of its customers.

573.5(c)(9): Copies of Communications with Dealers or Purchasers

A copy will be provided when available.

573.5(c)(10): Copies of Proposed Owner Notification Letter

A copy will be provided when available.

573.5(c)(11): Manufacturer's Campaign Identification Number

The MBUSA Recall Campaign Number will be provided when available.

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Kenneth N. Weinstein
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If you or your staff have any questions, please feel free to contact me at (201) 573-2698 or Mr. Stephen Kreitz, of my staff, at 201-573-4118.

Sincerely,



Gary H. Bowne
Department Manager,
Product Compliance & Analysis