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Mercedes-Benz

Mercedes-Benz USA, LLC
A Daimler Company

June 11, 2012

SENT BY E-MAIL (rmd.odi@dot.gov) ***AND CERTIFIED U.S. MAIL***

Ms. Nancy Lewis
Associate Administrator, Enforcement
National Highway Traffic Safety Administration
Attention: Recall Management Division
1200 New Jersey Avenue, S.E.
NVS-200, Room W45-306
Washington, D.C. 20590

Re: Part 573 Defect Information Report

Dear Ms. Lewis:

Pursuant to the requirements of 49 C.F.R. Part 573, and on behalf of our parent company, Daimler AG (DAG), this letter advises you of a safety-related defect that has been determined to exist in certain Mercedes-Benz vehicles. Specifically, Mercedes-Benz USA, LLC (MBUSA) submits this report regarding the rear suspension in certain Model Year 2007 to 2009 Mercedes-Benz vehicles.

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

Daimler AG, Stuttgart, Germany.

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

573.6(c)(2): Identification of Vehicles

Make	Line/Model	Model Year	Inclusive Dates of Manufacture
Mercedes-Benz	Previous E-Class Wagon (211 platform) without AIRMATIC suspension (steel-springs on the front axle and air-springs on the rear axle)	2007-2009	July 1, 2006 - April 30, 2009

Mercedes-Benz USA, LLC
One Mercedes Drive
P.O. Box 350
Montvale, NJ 07645-0350
Phone (201) 573-0600
Fax (201) 573-0117
www.MBUSA.com

573.6(c)(2)(iv): Manufacturer's Name of Affected Component and Country of Origin

Affected component: Level control system connecting rod
KHT Fahrzeugteile GmbH
Industriestr. 13
41516 Grevenbroich
Germany

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

Approximately 3,613 Mercedes-Benz vehicles are potentially affected in the US.

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

The percentage of vehicles that are projected to actually contain the subject component described below is 100%.

573.6(c)(5): Description of Defect

DAG has determined that the load leveling rear air suspension in the subject vehicles may not perform as designed due to a supplier material specification issue that can cause the ball head of a connecting rod in the level control system to seize. The rod is connected to the stabilizer bar and transmits the vertical movement of the suspension system to a sensor. In the case of a seized ball, the rod may break. Should this occur, the possibility exists that the sensor will generate a constant signal indicating that air suspension level is too low. This triggers a continuous attempt to increase the pressure in the air bellows, which can first lead to uncomfortable and stiff suspension characteristics, and in very rare cases could lead to a loss of air pressure in the air bellows. To date, we are not aware of any cases in the U.S. where the air bellows have failed.
As a result of a failure of the rear air suspension connecting rod, owners may experience reduced control of the vehicle which could increase the risk of a vehicle crash.

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

In the beginning of 2012, DAG observed an increase in field cases containing customer complaints relating to uncomfortable and stiff suspension characteristics.
After extensive investigations including part inspections, the company identified the potential for seizing of the ball head of the connecting rod in the level control system.
Further investigations showed that in rare cases, this could result in the rod breaking. This breakage could cause a pressure overload, and in rare cases, failure of the air bellows if the shut-off logic did not stop the erroneous constant pressure increase prior to complete loss of air pressure in the bellows.

Test drives performed by DAG with damaged air bellows determined that reduced control of the vehicle cannot be ruled out.

573.6(c)(8)(i): Remedy Program

MBUSA will conduct a voluntary recall campaign for the subject vehicles described above. The recall campaign will be conducted to replace the level control system connecting rod with a modified version that is not prone to seizure.

573.6(c)(8)(ii): Estimated Date of Owner Notification

MBUSA estimates owner notification will begin in August, 2012.

573.6(c)(10): Copies of Communications with Dealers or Purchasers

Dealers will be notified of the pending recall campaign as soon as the appropriate repair documents and internal communications are prepared. The voluntary recall campaign is expected to commence in August, 2012. A copy of all communications will be provided to NHTSA when available.

573.6(c)(11): Copies of Proposed Owner Notification Letter

A copy of the owner notification will be provided when available.

573.6(c)(12): Manufacturer's Campaign Identification Number

The MBUSA Recall Campaign Number will be provided when available.

Should you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact Mr. R. Thomas Brunner at brunnert@mbusa.com.

Sincerely,

FOR

Frank J. Diertl
General Manager,
Engineering Services

R. Thomas Brunner
Department Manager,
Vehicle Compliance and Analysis