



January 2018 Newsletter

Greetings Fellow Mercedes-Benz Owners!

I hope you and your car are both doing well. It's been a cold winter, but don't worry - your car was built to handle it. Just make sure it's properly maintained, and watch out for some of the common problems that can crop up with the cold. Here are some winter maintenance tips.

TIRES

There are several things that need attention in cold weather. One of the first things you might notice are TPMS messages alerting you to low tire pressure. TPMS is the "*Tire Pressure Management System*", but not all cars have it. Some 2007 models, and most all 2008+ models will have TPMS. It's not that your tires lose air when it's cold, but the air inside them actually "shrinks". It's a good idea to check the pressure periodically to make sure that it's correct.

The proper pressure for your car's tires will be listed on a label attached to driver's door sill. You may also find it on a label inside the fuel filler door. Note that there may be different pressures listed for "full loads" or "high speeds". Make sure to use the appropriate pressures for front and rear tires, and to check them when cold, i.e. before driving more than a few miles. Don't forget to check the spare tire, too! It generally uses a higher pressure than the regular tires. Note that SL's generally have deflated tires and a pump, so no check is necessary. Some cars, like the SLK, may not have a spare at all.

COOLANT

Check your coolant level. For most Mercedes-Benz models, the level is checked in the expansion tank. The proper level is right where the translucent bottom section and black top section meet. Shine a flashlight through the tank to more easily see the level. If you have to open the cap to better see, **ONLY** open it when the engine is **COOL!** When the engine is warm, the coolant is under pressure and can spew out of the lid causing burns. **DO NOT open the cap when the engine is hot!**

If you do need to add coolant, you should use a 50/50 mixture of an approved

antifreeze and distilled water. Note that generic antifreeze like Prestone is not compatible with Mercedes-Benz system. One that is compatible, and usually easy to find is Xerex G-05. It may not be the same color as what's in your car, but it will work. It's normal for a car to lose a small amount of coolant over the years, but if you seem to always be low on coolant, you may have a problem that needs to be investigated. Also, the coolant does need to be changed periodically. For most cars, it's every 10 years, but others may be more often. Check your maintenance manual for the interval specific to your model and year.

BATTERY

Your vehicle's battery is especially susceptible to extreme temperatures, both hot and cold. A fully charged battery will put out 12.6 volts. A weak battery can cause all sorts of problems, ranging from strange electrical gremlins to leaving you stranded and unable to start your car. Batteries generally last about four years. If yours is over four years old and it seems slow to start, or you are having electrical issues, it's probably a good idea to replace it.

So, how do you know if your battery is weak? Sluggish cranking is one symptom. Of course if the engine won't crank at all, then that's probably a giveaway. You can actually check the voltage of your battery. Most all Mercedes-Benz vehicles have a built-in voltmeter, but it's in a "hidden" menu. To access it, switch the engine on to the "accessory" mode, or "Position 1" of the ignition switch. Make sure the display on the instrument cluster shows the "main" screen with the odometer, speed or outside temperature (i.e. not the radio, phone, or navigation information). Now, press the trip reset button three times. You should hear a beep, and then see "UB" and the voltage displayed on the screen. For most cars, anything under 12.5 volts may indicate a problem. For cars with a dual battery system (SL, E and S class cars), it's not unusual to see 12.3 volts if the car has been sitting for a day.

There are a few things you can do to keep your battery healthy. First of all, don't operate accessories in the car unless the engine is running. In other words, it's not a good idea to sit in the car with the engine off, headlights on and the radio going. Heated seats require a good bit of power, so they should definitely be used only with the engine running. If you see a red battery warning message, it's important to have the electrical system checked. Especially on cars like the SL, E and S classes that use electrically operated brake systems.

SQUEAKS AND RATTLES

Cold weather brings out the worst in rubber, which is used extensively in cars for seals, bushings and isolators. It gets hard and does not bend and flex as easily. This can cause noises which may be just annoying, or a sign of a serious problem. For rubber seals around windows, trunk lids, and convertible roofs, the noises will be just annoyances, but they can be quieted with an appropriate lubricant. Mercedes-Benz

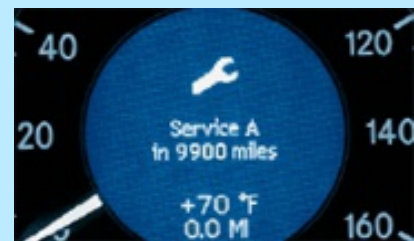
sells a really good lube for the convertible top seals that can be used on any noisy rubber. It's expensive - over \$40 for a small vial - but it works and a little bit goes a long way. See your Mercedes-Benz dealer and as for part number A 000 989 36 60.

Other noises, like in the suspension as you go over bumps, can indicate worn parts that need attention. It's unlikely that anything will fall apart causing a safety concern but it can cause wheels alignment issues. Another thing you may experience is increased engine vibration. This can be a sign of worn engine mounts and it's often more noticeable in colder weather. This is not a critical repair, but new engine mounts can certainly make the car more comfortable to ride in.

TRIVIA QUESTION

What does SBC stand for and what does it do?

Send us your answers at info@benzbits.com. We'll announce the correct answer and "winners" in the next newsletter. There are no prizes, just recognition for the right answer!



Thanks for reading! We hope you have enjoyed this month's topics.

Sincerely,

Benzbits

Got questions? Ideas for newsletter topic? Drop us a note - info@benzbits.com

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