

## Monthly Update for SLK Owners Club Facebook Page - 31/10/2022.

Hi folks, it's that time again, this is the latest monthly 'Recorded Data' Update, from March 2021 to 31 October 2022.

Mainly on the SLK R171, but also on other MB Models, regarding the rear subframe corrosion situation, keeping you all informed of owners' progress, successes and other related rear subframe issues. There are also other issues with MB vehicles that we have also started to work with owners to challenge MB about,

Regarding R171 claims: We have now been contacted by 541 - R171 Owners in total and, are working with 200+ of them. 112 of these owners have come through BenzWorld/MBOC, these are mainly in the UK and Northern Ireland but, we are still working with owners in Europe (Republic of Ireland, Guernsey, Poland, Holland, France, Norway, Netherlands) also Australia, Canada and increasing numbers of owners in from the USA (of ALL affected MB Models).

With the R171, we have had 196 subframes replaced or authorised for replacement FOC (this includes 11 members whose vehicles are in Dealerships having subframes changed or are waiting for parts atm).

The latest count shows that we have had 30 - R171 subframes that have collapsed, whilst the cars were being driven, fortunately, there have been no serious injuries and no fatalities in our Owners Club. I have, made a FoI Request to Nottingham Police, requested information on the accident video posted on the Club Facebook page of a post from, 'Mail On-line' to see if the SLK involved, was inspected at the time, regarding the condition of the subframe?

Currently, 34 of the subframes that have been inspected, have been passed as 'Serviceable', by MB Dealerships. As a matter of course, we have suggested that the owners have their subframes inspected by an Independent Garage to ensure that they are safe. This is advised, after one of our owners' subframe collapsed less than 2 months after being passed as serviceable by MB.

We have also had 27 owners out of a total of 36, who have had their subframes changed FOC, despite them having been welded and, we have 9 owners with welded subframes, waiting for theirs to be inspected. Worryingly, we have recently had an issue with some, initially, 'Good List' Dealerships making their own decisions as to whether the welded subframes should be replaced, this takes the decision away from, MBCS UK who are not given the option to approve the replacement of welded subframes, on the previous report, it can be seen that this seemed to have been successfully challenged and was over-turned by Management in Germany. Unfortunately, things have not returned to the way it was in the past. Dealerships should not be making the decisions; this is up to MBCS UK!! This issue has been brought to the attention of senior management in MB Germany!

As I said above, one specific dealership has been refusing to send the reports off to MBCS UK for their approval or refusal? Since this dealerships' Initial refusal, they have refused another subframe replacement because it had been welded, again, refusing to forward the report to MBCS UK.

Since then, other dealerships have had 2 subframes approved for replacement by MBCS UK despite them having been welded?

There is a lack of consistency in these decisions? One of the owners was left only with the option, to contact MB senior management in Germany which the owner did, and Senior Management in Germany investigated the issues and overturned the Dealership and MBUK decision.

I have now moved this dealership to the 'To Avoid' List, posted their information on the Club Facebook page to inform owners, and, as such, I will not recommend this Dealership to owners in future – unless; there is absolutely no option for the vehicle owner, and, only then, if the subframe has not been welded. This issue has not yet been resolved. The Dealership position will be kept under review, and should their attitude change, they could be returned to the 'Good List' again!!

We have a dealership on the Channel Islands that had been a little slow sending reports off the MBCS UK, I have now been informed that the dealership have had their subframe replacement approved, but we will see how they performed before they are put on the Good List, permanently.

Dealerships (now on my 'To Avoid' List) are still demanding a signed agreement from Owners, that the owner will agree to pay costs, up to £1800, for “components they ‘may’ have to replace”, in advance of work starting (owners SHOULD NOT agree to this!! Contact me if this is requested!!) I have had 2 owners this month, where ONE dealership has refused to start work unless the owners sign an agreement to pay for parts that ‘May’ need replacing – owners challenge this, I sent them information that should help. I have also suggested that, if this doesn’t work, that they should take their cars to another dealership, from a different Dealership Group. There has been some movement from these initial challenges, dealerships undertake the subframe replacement and are, generally, changing their minds about pursuing or at least substantially, reducing these charges – We now have new contact information for senior MB Management in Daimler/Mercedes-Benz AG in Germany, which we will continue to use, if/when we escalate any complaints.

We still have some owners who are receiving the initial reply from MBCS UK, saying that owners should have a FMBSH, and that they should take the car to an MB Dealership for a Safety Check! NOTE: We still only have ONE owner with anything like a FMBSH.

There is still a reluctance, on the part of MB Dealerships, to detail the replacement of the rear subframe on receipts/invoices, for Owners’ Service History, as under a 1/4 are being recorded on owners’ receipts/invoices. Currently, of the owners who have responded; 18 owners have a ‘subframe replaced’ receipt and, 91 have not.

I am still concerned, that some MB Dealerships are still coercing owners to pay for parts which should be covered by the Warranty, i.e., nuts, bolts, brackets, Mountings, etc. and some of the prices quoted, do appear excessive for what is identified (Up to £1200)!! Again, we challenge this behaviour! We have had one dealership wanting to charge £800 to replace brake pipes and fuel pipe stating that it will take 5 hours?? This is something we *are* challenging.

It is good to see, that MB are still undertaking subframe replacements and, the current turn-around time on authorisation does, in general, seem to be substantially quicker, despite of there, sometimes, apparently, being a shortage of subframes in the UK from time to time which does slow the actual turn-round time and Dealerships are still saying that it can take up to 6 weeks.

I keep getting requests from owners questioning timescales for the supply of new subframes and additional charges – mainly R171’s, but including C & E-Class – I have produced a draft email for owners to, initially, send to MBCS UK to see if they can help provide some sort of timescale? I have also drafted an email for owners to send to the Directors and CEO on D/MB AG in Germany, I have heard from an owner who used the draft email to contact the Directors and CEO of Daimler Mercedes-Benz AG in Germany, about timescales for delivery – the CEO was not happy with the reasons given for the delays, and contacted the dealership; 3 days after the owner emailed Germany, they received a call from the dealership to pick up the car, the subframe had been delivered and fitted, there were no additional charges! 😊 Success! I have heard from an owner who had to wait for ages for the replacement subframe, MBCS UK gave them a £100 John Lewis Voucher for their patience waiting for the replacement subframe – that’s a first? 😊 . We have had another success, when we challenged Dealerships who are trying to charge for subframe components that should be covered by the Goodwill Warranty by sending a personalised draft email to the Directors and CEO in Germany, the Dealership in question had initially said it would be 4-5 weeks to change the subframe and there would be a charge for parts.

Less than a week later the dealership contacted the owner and said the car was done and, that there would be no additional charges – another good outcome!!

There had been issues importing new subframes *into* Germany, from wherever MB are importing them? These issues have influenced the numbers being completed. I received information from one of my sources, that some 70 subframes had been imported into the UK, around the 25<sup>th</sup> July, which had spurred the dealerships into action, they had been calling cars in, that have been kept at home whilst waiting for parts, are now fitting the new subframes for owners who have been waiting. I have also heard that there has been another delivery since, so we hoped to see an improvement in completion timescales, this seems to have dropped off again. Ongoing!

*Unfortunately, I am still receiving reports that some owners are having issues with rattles, etc. from newly fitted subframes, this is concerning I am still looking into this issue and feel that there may be a need to report this to the Directors and the CEO of Daimler/Mercedes-Benz if this issue persists, as it could be dangerous.*

*Lookers Wolverhampton Dealership are the latest to have a '?' against their names on my list (although I have had some good feedback in the last day or so), there are now two Dealerships that are in this position for similar reasons. The quality of repairs/replacements must, ultimately, be addressed by MBUK and, D/M-B AG in Germany!!*

*The Club and I have had a mention in Septembers Issue of the **Car Mechanics Magazine** regarding our crusade for FOC subframe replacements as we helped them get the subframe replaced FOC by MB on their 'Project Mercedes' rebuild of an R171! (I believe a copy of the article has been published on the Club Facebook Pages) 😊 this will help add weight to the information we send out regarding the Subframe replacement issues to MB Dealerships, MBCS UK and hopefully MBUSA.*

#### Subframes - Retrospective Reimbursement Claims.

This is progressing, I have sent information to owners, and I will continue to send out information sheets and Draft emails, for owners to personalise and send-off to D/MB AG in Germany. I will continue to keep owners informed as things progress.

As I said in the last monthly report, I heard from owners who had to pay for their own subframe replacements, and we have had 2 owners who have been reimbursed for their subframes and, in one case, some other components that they were charged for, I am sure that this will continue to be successful for owners who have been out of pocket. We still have an owner who is having an issue with a claim atm, MB's reimbursement offer is insufficient, but, hopefully, we should be able to resolve this soon? This is becoming an issue in the USA too, I have produced a Retrospective Reimbursement Claim Form for the USA As we have owners in the US that are in the same situation, having to pay for their subframes which we will help to get reimbursed for the costs – they just need to keep all their receipts, as our owners over here do, as proof.

Should owners have any questions or issues, I am available to be contacted through the Club Facebook Page, BenzWorld and directly by email, should owners want to discuss, individual; Cases/Issues/Problems/Good Dealerships/Dealerships to Avoid, etc. and, if they should require any Moral Support through the process.

I hope this Data informs and encourages other owners to look at the current situation, regarding R171 rear subframe replacements and, prompt them to either, check or, get their subframes checked, for safety's sake? We have had 30 subframes collapse whilst the cars were being driven!

#### Other Mercedes Benz Models and Other Issues.

##### R172 Models:

Don't forget that there could also be issues with corrosion on R172 rear subframes, I have compiled an Information Sheet for the R172!

To date, we have 19 owners who have requested the Information Sheet for the R172 rear subframes. 1 subframe inspected and passed as OK!!

##### SLK R172 - Laminated Roof Issues:

I am working with 6 members with their laminated roof panels delaminating, I have composed an email for MBCS UK regarding the roof issue and have had some feedback from the owners re: response to Roof Information Sheet. We have now escalated this to Senior Management in Daimler Mercedes-Benz AG in Germany. Ongoing.

##### SLK R172 – Opal Red Paintwork issues:

There are issues with the Opal Red paintwork on the R172 and in getting MB to even look at the paintwork let alone get resprays approved, and completed FOC, owners can use our Draft Email Paintwork claim paperwork, to make the claim through MBCS UK and the MB Dealerships (Bodywork), contact me if you are having issues with the paintwork on Opal Red R172's.

### R231 Models (New Model)

In last month's report, I informed the groups that I was contacted by the owner of 2013 SL350 with 60k on the clock they bought it 5 weeks ago and it had been MOT'd 5 weeks ago and the subframe has collapsed, I feel that it is important to get the information out there that this Model is also susceptible to collapse, to warn owners. After the dealership sent the report to MB in Germany, I can report that the replacement of the subframe has been approved by MB and, that it has now been replaced FOC.

I have had a look on various MB Forum worldwide, and the subframe corrosion on the R231 appears to be quite a common issue, I have posted an Introductory Message, warning owners of the subframe corrosion/collapsing issues on the R231 BenzWorld pages, and, on the Owners Club Facebook page, as we also need to keep an eye on this model within the Owners Club!

### W204, W218, W203, W212 and C207 Models:

In the last 4-5 months, we have been working with, some 93 owners of W204/W218/W203/W212/C207 (C-Class & E-Class), most, have approached me directly, 78 of them, through the 'BenzWorld' Forum Site. Owners are from the UK and across Europe, Australia, Canada, and increasing numbers from all across the USA.

We have had 8 owners of these models whose subframes have collapsed whilst their cars were being driven, some as new as 2014 and, 2 subframes have been welded.

Of the 93 owners of W204/W218/W203/W212/C207 Models worked with, we have had some success with subframe replacements; of the 17 subframes (11x W204, 4x W218, 1x W212 and 1x W203), in the UK and Europe, have been inspected to date, MB have replaced or agreed to replace all 17 subframes, FOC. 3 of which have been welded. Of the 17 replaced FOC. Information from respondents have reported that: 0 have and 8 have not received receipts listing the subframe replacement.

The vehicles currently being worked with, are W204's & W218's – 2010- 2014, the W212 – some of these models were built as late as 2014 with mileages as little as 50k which have collapsed, and the W203's built from 2003 onwards.

There are serious issues with MBUSA atm, I am having to provide substantially more information to US owners, this additional information is needed when owners are dealing with US Dealerships and with MBUSA. (This issue is discussed further, under General Information) I will keep members updated with progress on the R172, W204, W218, W203 and W212, etc. models as things progress.

I have received an email from a UK owner of a 2008, W204, who had their car MOT'd 2 months ago, no advisory on rear subframe corrosion, who was driving, with their 4 year old in the car, on a motorway when they had to brake fairly hard, they nearly lost control of the car, because their subframe had snapped!! this is a really serious safety issue and MB need to take action and recall all affected models before someone is killed - if they haven't already been - due to subframes collapsing!!

### Bubbling and Lifting paint/Lacquer - 'Fire Opal Red' Paint on R172 Models

I have been helping some owners of R172 Models who have lifting/bubbling on their 'Opal Red' paintwork – there have been issues with Dealerships and MBCS UK refusing to examine vehicles with this paint problem – I have put together a Draft email and information sheet to get Dealerships to examine the paintwork on affected vehicles, we have had another success and an owner has succeeded in getting their bodywork examined and, MB agreed to respray the vehicle FOC providing that the paintwork is original, the car has now been resprayed FOC by MB. Should anyone have this problem with their paintwork, and require an information sheet, please contact me.

General Information:

As some of you know I have been working with Andrew Everett from Car Mechanics Magazine, re: 'Project Mercedes' being undertaken on an R171 by the Magazine (Re: The subframe Issues). They used our Claim paperwork and had their subframe replaced FOC and the Club and I both got a mention in the article as leading a crusade to support owners with corroded and collapsed subframe issues.

*(Reminder)* As you will remember, there was an Article published in the 'Gebrauchtwagen' Motoring Magazine in Germany, that suggested that MB are going to undertake the replacement of corroded subframes FOC, on Models that have, what MB term – 'multi-link rear suspension', these would include the majority of models listed on the MB Service Supplement Document regarding rear subframes: S135.00-P-0009A Service Information: Supplement to notes in maintenance documents on rear axle. Issued 05-11-2018", which includes the R171, the main stipulations within the Article, being that; "the subframes should be inspected and their replacement undertaken, in MB Dealerships".

A copy of this Article was posted on the Club Facebook Page by a member who lives in Germany (unfortunately the Article was in German, but the above interpretation, gives the general gist of the Article).

As I questioned in my last report, *"Regarding the subframe replacement; We need to identify the timescales involved; if it applies to ALL Models that have multi-link suspension; All the models listed in the Article; and, if the FOC subframe replacements, apply worldwide?"*

Well, after some investigation, the answer to the majority of these question is, currently, NO!! MB are not replacing subframes FOC on affected models in the USA – yet!! Well over a dozen US owners, who I am working with currently, who own; R171, W204, W203, W212 and W218 Models, are getting together and approaching the National Highway and Transportation Safety Administration (NHTSA) in the USA and, using the data and information, on the effects of rear subframe corrosion, that we have identified and compiled in the UK, along with details of their own experiences with rear subframe corrosion and/or subframe collapses, are presenting this evidence, to the NHTSA, some owners are also using this same information and experiences, to put a case before the Attorney General, to see if they can force MB to issue a 'Recall Notice' on all affected models in the USA, on the grounds that the subframe corrosion issues, affect the general safety of the various MB Models, i.e. the potential dangers to; owners, passengers and other road users that could be caused by subframe collapses, etc. Dangers that we have identified over here in the UK and Europe, will affect the safety of the owners driving affected MB Models, over in the USA.

I have recently been informed by some owners in the US, that they have contacted a Lawyer in New York City (the same Lawyer that successfully took MB to court over the fuel emissions issue in the US) and they are looking at taking MB to court regarding the Safety Issues, posed by the corrosion and collapse of rear subframes – they are using the Data and information that we have compiled over here in the UK, as evidence. (Continuing)

Since I placed three Posts on MB Subframe Corrosion on BenzWorld/Mercedes Benz Owners Club Forum Sites, there have been:

18000\* Views of the R171 Rear Subframe Post, resulting in 112 contacts from owners to date,

11000\* Views of the W204/W218/W212/C207/W214, Rear Subframe Post, resulting in 75 contacts from owners to date, and,

3000\* Views of the W203 Rear Subframe Post, in the 10 weeks it has been up, there have now been 3 contacts from owners to date.

580\* Views of the W212 Rear Subframe Post, in the 4 weeks it has been up, there have been 8 contacts from owners to date.

I have just posted a further 'Initial Post' on BenzWorld on the R231 Section informing owners of the potential dangers, in-light of the email about a 2013, SL350 subframe collapsing due to corrosion, just 5 weeks after an MOT – I will, record contacts, as with the Models above. Currently - 1 (BW) contact and, one subframe collapse. FOC replacement completed by MB.

\* Approx. Numbers recorded by BenzWorld

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