

A beginner's Guide to the Mercedes-Benz Electronic Parts Catalog

EPCnet Online version

This brief guide was written for people who are completely unfamiliar with the Mercedes-Benz parts system. It provides an introduction to the system, and explains the process of specifying a part for a vehicle. Detailed explanations for each specific function and menu of EPC net can be found in the Help file, accessible by pressing F1.

Overview

The Mercedes-Benz parts system is organized into a series of “*Catalogs*”, each containing the information for a specific range of vehicle models or major components. Each Catalog is further organized by parts *Groups*. Within each Group are certain kinds of parts, which are generally the same from one catalog to the next. For example, Group 42 is “Braking System”, and within Group 42 you’ll find parts such as brake pads and calipers. A list of Groups can be found elsewhere on this web site. Illustrations guide you to a list of possible parts, and then *Codes* and *Footnotes* will allow you to determine the exact part for your vehicle. *Aggregates* which are major components such as Engines and Transmissions have their own catalogs, which are linked to the vehicle model catalog.

An understanding of the process, from selecting the correct Catalog for your vehicle, to interpreting the footnotes, is necessary for you to obtain good results. The short version of the sequence for accurately specifying a part is as follows:

1. Enter the VIN
2. Select the parts Group
3. Locate and select the part Illustration/subgroup
4. Determine, using Codes and Footnotes, the specific part number.

Each of these steps is described in detail below.

Catalogs

The first step in locating any part is to select the correct Catalogs. By far, the easiest and most accurate way of doing this is to enter the Vehicle Identification Number (VIN) or chassis number and allow EPC net select the appropriate Catalogs. You can find the VIN of your vehicle on the Title, Registration or Insurance card, or refer to the Owners manual for the location of the VIN plate or label on your vehicle.

The advantage of using the VIN is that, for vehicles built since approximately 1978, the Vehicle Data Card becomes available. This Data Card contains information about what optional equipment, paint and interior colors, and specific Aggregate types and serial numbers were used on your vehicle. It is very difficult to specify the correct parts without this information. Note that a copy of the Vehicle Data Card is supplied with each vehicle when first delivered. For vehicles earlier than 1978, contact the Mercedes-Benz Classic Center for a copy of your Vehicle Data Card. Proof of vehicle ownership may be required.

Most passenger cars have a VIN prefix of WDB, but the M Class and G Class, for example, start with 4JG and WDC, respectively. Select the correct prefix, which is part of the VIN, and then enter the remainder of your VIN into the text box as shown. You can enter either the World VIN (such as WDBCA39D4HA288401) or the Chassis Number (such as 126.039-1A-288401, but without the period or dashes). In vehicles built before Model Year 1980, the VIN is identical to the Chassis Number.

In certain cases, you might not have the VIN available, or you might not want to use the VIN (see “Exceptions to the Rules” below). In these cases, select the vehicle type (Car or Cross-country vehicle) and then select the specific Baumuster (model type number, such as 126039 for 560 SEL) from the list. A listing of models and the corresponding Baumuster is found elsewhere on this web site. Please also note that the model type number is generally known as a Baumuster in most literature, abbreviated BM.

Once you have entered either the VIN, or selected your Baumuster, the EPC selects the appropriate Catalogs which apply to your vehicle. In some cases, you may be asked to select which specific Aggregate catalog(s) your vehicle requires. Consult the Vehicle Data Card, Service Literature, or Technical data manual for that information, or review the Catalog description for help in selection. Note that in rare cases, the choice can be difficult. Strategies for managing this choice include selecting a Catalog at random – you can usually determine if it applies, either from the parts presented, or from the information on the bottom status bar.

Catalogs are designated with three characters, some with only numbers (like 570), while others use letters as well (like 68N). Selecting the correct Catalog is essential. For some models, especially when using the Baumuster instead of the VIN, you may have to also select the model year or model year range, such as for Baumuster 124030 (300E). These are fairly intuitive, but you should know the model year and production date of your vehicle. The production date is usually shown on the VIN plate, often on the B Pillar (front door jamb). Consult your owners manual for the correct location of the VIN plate in your vehicle.

SAs

A different type of Catalog is also used for certain types of equipment, especially in vehicles before the 1990s, known as an SA. SA is an abbreviation for the Germans term “Sonder Ausstattung”, which means “Special Equipment”. This is all equipment that was not considered standard equipment for the German market, such as Air Conditioning and Power Windows. What equipment is listed as an SA and what is listed in the standard Catalogs varies by model. Many of the SA Catalogs have long since been incorporated into the USA EPC data, but in some cases the SA might apply. Regardless, the EPC automatically alerts you to the existence of any SAs that might apply to your vehicle. It is your job, however, to know whether your car is equipped with that feature or not. If it is, look in the SA catalog for the parts, not the regular catalog.

There is an SA mode in the EPC, which can be used as a shortcut to the SA catalog, but you need to know the complete SA number to find it. Finding the SA number can be problematic, so it is best to always use BM (Baumuster, or Model Type Number) mode. As a reference, the SAs for

your vehicle are listed on the Vehicle Data Card, which is either provided at new delivery or available through EPC net.

As a final note, also be advised that all vehicles also have a number of Option Codes, always 3 or 4 characters, which also specify the equipment on the vehicle. Codes are discussed in greater detail later in this document. These codes are also listed on the Vehicle Data Card. The meaning of these codes can be found by using the BM/Code/Component feature on the Search menu. A word of caution, however: The meaning of some codes has changed in the last decade or so, and so the code meanings listed may not be accurate, or even listed, for older vehicles. Regardless, the correct code meaning is given, if necessary, in the listing for a specific part in plain text.

Search

Before going through the sometimes difficult steps of locating and identifying the correct part, if you have the part number of the original part, you can search using that information. Nearly every Mercedes-Benz part has a part number on it. Remove the part you need from the vehicle, if possible, and locate the part number. Using the Search menu, enter the part number (Please refer to the Guide to Mercedes-Benz Part Numbers document for advice) and, if that part number is listed in the Catalog, a listing will appear with hyperlinks to the correct Group, Subgroup and Illustration. Locate the part number, and review the footnotes and codes to locate the part number to order.

You can search for a part in two ways: Across all catalogs (helpful to identify where a part is used) or within a specific catalog (i.e., with vehicle data). There is also a feature which allows the lookup of models in which a particular aggregate is used.

Groups

Once the correct VIN or Baumuster has been selected, and the specific production date range or model year selected, the Group index will open. Selecting the correct group to look for a part is both the most important, and the most difficult, task when trying to find a part. The information in the Mercedes-Benz Parts Group Guide (elsewhere on this web site) will help you select the right Group, but this is merely a guide. Only experience will allow you to select the right group the first time, every time. When in doubt, contact an experienced Mercedes-Benz parts advisor at a local dealership.

Before we discuss Groups, a mention of “Aggregate” is in order. To Mercedes-Benz, Aggregate is not stones mixed into concrete, but instead a major assembly (which generally has its own catalog), such as the Engine, Transmission or Steering system. So, if you are looking for an Engine part (such as a piston, camshaft, or oil filter), first select the Engine Aggregate Catalog, which has its own groups, and start your search there. Aggregates are listed at the top of the group listing, and can also be searched by their own Baumusters from the Model listing.

Some of the Groups are obvious, such as Group 67 “Windows”, which contains Glass. Other Groups, such as Group 54 (Electrical Equipment and Instruments), are somewhat diverse, requiring additional time to properly navigate.

Start by selecting a likely Group for your search. Carefully review the Subgroup descriptions for a probable match, and select that subgroup to view the illustration. Note that some groups have only one subgroup, and some subgroups have more than one illustration.

It helps your search if you know what the part is, where it is installed, its function, and what it looks like. The illustrations are usually very good likenesses of the part, but not always. Click on the small “Callout” number next to the part illustration, and the part(s) which correspond will be filtered into the parts listing.

If you don’t find the part illustrated, there are a few possibilities. First could be that you’re in the wrong group. This is especially true when you see the part, but there’s no “callout” number next to it, or it’s shown ‘grayed out’. That’s a clear indication that the part is known, but shown elsewhere. Select another group, and scan the illustrations.

Second could be that the part is listed but not illustrated. In these cases, scroll through the parts listing (deselect any Callout numbers first), and look for parts where there is no callout number.

Note that it is extremely rare that a spare part is not listed or illustrated, especially in models that are more than a few years old.

Footnotes and Codes

Once you have found the illustration and selected the Callout number, you may be confronted with two or more part numbers, only one of which the right part for your car. This section explains how to narrow the list down to a single part. Of course, you will often end up with only one part number. That makes the choice easy.

In most cases, the EPC net system will eliminate most, if not all, of the inapplicable choices. It can be helpful, however, to know how to filter the parts listings manually, as follows.

If you are confronted with a list of dozens of parts, your strategy will be slightly different than if the list has only a few possibilities. For a very large list, the first step is to narrow down the possibilities to perhaps a half dozen, and proceed from there. The first way to remove some parts on a large list from consideration is to look at the “Version” column, which indicates LH Drive and RH Drive. In some cases, you can eliminate half the parts, since they apply to RH Drive vehicles (most USA vehicles are LH Drive). Next, look at the “Qty” column – if it shows dashes or zero, ignore that part. Finally, look for other obvious ways of ‘filtering out’ some parts – “Not with Air Conditioning” doesn’t apply if your car has A/C, for example.

With a reasonably sized list, the next step is to look at the Codes. Vehicle option Codes are listed as blue hyperlinks, starting with the 3 (sometimes 4) character option code. First, look for the code for “USA Vehicle”, which is 494 or 491. If there are parts with that code, and ones without it, you can often (but not always) eliminate any parts without that code. (Of course, if your vehicle is for some other country, follow the appropriate codes). Then, follow the remaining codes, and eventually you’ll get the list down to just a few, or perhaps only one, part number.

A note about Codes: You often have to make an educated guess with Codes. That means, you need to look at the appropriateness of a particular part based on how much the codes apply, and the one that seems to apply the most is usually correct. Think of each code as adding a percentage of ‘correctness’ to a particular part number. The part with the highest ‘percentage of correctness’ is usually the right part. Certain codes, however, carry more weight than others. 494 and 491 are two such codes. Also note that, with VIN filtering (when you enter the complete VIN), you usually get most of the non-applicable parts filtered out.

Once you narrow down your possibilities based on Code, then look at the Footnotes. These generally direct you to select the correct part based on VIN or production date. If there are three versions of wiring harness, for example, each version will have a footnote with a chassis number (or production date) range. Simply pick the one for your car. In many cases, EPC net will filter this for you as well.

Some footnotes help you specify the particular color for the part. The base number is the same for all colors, but a four-character color code (also known as an “ES2” Code) specifies the particular color. Most interior trim parts come in colors, as well as some exterior parts. If you know the color code for your paint and interior color, you can easily find the correct ES2 code. The color codes are on the vehicle data card, and sometimes also on a plate or label in the vehicle. Look on the radiator cross-member, the B Pillar, or in the trunk. Most owners manuals explain the location of the color codes. In most cases, the VIN filter handles this for you.

With some experience in specifying parts, you’ll find that the code and footnote interpretation becomes second nature. The footnote text is sometimes cryptic – or in German – but if you think about the poor fellow in Germany translating it, you’ll probably pick up on what they’re trying to say. Again, the older models are easier to work with, since most of the issues have been long since worked out.

Some specific exercises, which help point out the subtle nuances of finding the right part, are given elsewhere on this web site. Of course, you need to log in to practice with them.

Exceptions to the Rules

There are a few well-known exceptions which, if you don’t know about them, will lead to the wrong part. In these cases, you might not be able to rely on the VIN filtering.

The first, and most obvious one, is when you have a vehicle which has been modified after it left the factory. Whether it has been painted a different color, or some piece of optional equipment has been added by a dealer or owner, the VIN filter won’t know about that. In those cases, you have to use your common sense and knowledge of what’s been done to the car.

Another such case is Code 264, “License Plate Attachment - America”. Some 2001 and later cars have this code in fact, but do not have the code on the Data Card. Be aware that, when specifying bumpers, switch off the “Datacard SA Filter”

Other cases will be added to this document as they become known.

Conclusion

We at Mercedes-Benz USA hope that this brief guide to our spare parts system has been helpful. If you have any suggestions or recommendations, we'd like to hear about them. Please contact us through the feedback form elsewhere on this web site. Every communication will be acknowledged. We regret that we are unable to provide assistance with specifying the correct part for your vehicle – please contact your local Mercedes-Benz dealer's parts department.

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Appendix D: Some Exercises

These exercises assume a basic familiarity with the EPC net application.

Exercise 1: Simple part specification: 560SEL rear brake disk.

1. Enter the VIN WDB 1260391A288401
2. Select Group 42, “Brakes”
3. Select subgroup 045 “Rear Wheel Brake”
4. Click on the Callout number (53) just below the illustration of the rear brake disk.
5. Part Number A 126 423 00 12 should be the only selection on the list. Note that there is a Quantity of 2 used per vehicle.
6. Clear the selected callouts using the yellow star icon

Exercise 2: Part Specification with Footnote

1. After completing Exercise 1, click on the callout number (41) for the repair kit for the rear brake caliper. Note the wrench symbol (which denotes a repair kit for the caliper).
2. Two part numbers appear. The second one has a footnote (880). Click on the footnote to open it.
3. The footnote reads “880 – From Model Year 88”.
4. Your vehicle is a Model year 1987, so the first part (without a footnote) applies, A001 586 73 43. Note that the vehicle must have a caliper built by Teves (a manufacturer). If not, the vehicle has been modified and the correct caliper should be installed before proceeding.

Exercise 3: Simple specification of an oil filter

1. Erase the previous information by selecting “1. Car”
2. Select Model 129068 (SL 500 USA)
3. Select “Maj. Assy. M – Engine” at the top of the Group listing, since Engine Lubrication is where you find Oil Filters.
4. Note the Engine Baumuster is displayed, along with the Engine Groups.
5. Select the Group named “Engine Lubrication”
6. Select the Subgroup named “Oil Filter”
7. Callout 155 is the Oil Filter Kit, and the lines indicate that all of those items are included in the kit. Note that you can also get the oil filter housing, oil cooler, and some hardware and seals as well.
8. After selecting Callout 155, note that the three numbers are replaced leaving only the fourth as valid.

Exercise 4: Part Specification, wiring harness in older vehicle

1. Enter the VIN WDB 1160331A015922
2. Note that no data card is available
3. Select Group 54 “Electrical Equipment and Instruments”

4. Using the image number list above the illustration, navigate to Image 4 of 13. (Note only 10 of the 13 images are shown; the blue arrows bring up the others) As you click through the images, note the various items illustrated.
5. In the image, locate and click on callout 147, the Fuel Injection Harness.
6. The two choices have footnotes. Decide which harness fits this vehicle by referring to the VIN.

Exercise 5: Part Specification, wiring harness on newer vehicle, filters off (Advanced)

1. Enter the VIN WDB 2110651A221282
2. Select Group 54 “Electrical Equipment and Instruments”
3. Select Subgroup 545 “Main Cable Harness Frame Floor Unit”. This is the main harness that goes from the front doors to the tail lights.
4. Note how the individual connector pieces are shown, with a connector symbol and a callout. The name associated with the callout will tell you where the connector is used. Also note that the harness itself is drawn much like it is laid out in the vehicle.
5. Select Callout 10, the harness itself. Two parts appear, and from the VINs in the footnotes, both seem to apply to this vehicle. In this case, we must use the production date (which are always more accurate) given in the footnote, comparing that with the date (22.01.2003) on the data card. However, if we wanted to do this the “hard way”, we can learn something, so we’ll use this opportunity to explain advanced navigation.
6. Select the Filter icon at the upper right of the screen (a funnel-like icon), and deselect all the checkboxes (See what the yellow star does!). Click OK.
7. Re-select callout 10. Note that your list contains nearly 50 part numbers. Beneath each part number is the model applicability, in brackets. [061 065 070], as shown on the first line, indicates that the part applies to Baumusters 211.061, 211.065 and 211.070.
8. Scroll downwards. Note that many parts – half of them, in fact – have an “R” in the “Vers” column – this means they are for Right Hand Drive vehicles, and not correct for a USA vehicle. All those can be eliminated.
9. Scroll to the top of the list again. About half-way down, note that some of the parts have Code 494, or 489+494.
10. Review the data card by clicking on the Data Card icon at the top. At the lower left, scroll through the Codes. 494 is shown, but 489 is not. Close the data card.
11. Select the part which has all of the following attributes: Has Code 494, but not 489+494, AND applies to ‘065’, AND has a footnote which agrees with the VIN or date.
12. You should have found A211 540 30 09.

Exercise 6: Subcomponents

1. After completing Exercise 5, deselect all callouts using the yellow star above the illustration. Ensure the Filters are still deactivated.
2. Scroll down the parts list and note the listing for callout 30, “Pin Bushing Housing”, a plastic electrical connector body. The dot before the description means that “this is a sub-component included with the number listed without a dot above”, in this case Callout 10.
3. Note that callout 30 does not apply to only one of the listings for callout 10, but all of them. If there were exceptions, these would be noted with footnotes or codes for Callout 30.

4. Finally, also note that if you order the harness in Callout 10, it will include the connector housing in callout 30 (and many other listed).

Exercise 8: Part Specification with a color code

1. Enter the VIN 1631571A454312. Note that you must change the VIN prefix to 4JG for the data card to be retrieved.
2. Navigate to Group 68 (Coverings), subgroup 260
3. Look at the parts text listing – none of the callouts in the illustration (for example, 72) are on the parts list. In this case, select the next illustration (8 of 9) instead, using the image number list above the illustration.
4. You're looking for the center console armrest cover – callout 126. Select that callout.
5. Note there are three footnotes, 820, 831 and 925. Click on the blue hyperlink and read them.
6. The first two footnotes (820, 831) relate to a VIN range – our vehicle is within the range (A289560 to A458809), so we're OK. (Note, when the VIN is close to the footnote range, you should verify which part is correct on the vehicle – the footnote VIN ranges may not be exact). Our VIN doesn't have an X, so those VIN numbers do not apply.
7. The third footnote, 925 – scroll down to see it – helps us find the ES2 color code for this part.
8. Note that many color footnotes are shown, but only one (925, which applies to this part) has hyperlinks for the color codes. (This is not always true, sometimes you need to remember which footnote applies).
9. On the data card, at the left center is the paint code for this vehicle (040U) and near the right is the interior color code (261A). Going back to the footnote, if we scroll down carefully, following the column with "261" in it, we find that Color Code "9B96" (Anthracite) applies.
10. In this case, the complete part number to order is A163 680 90 39 9B96.

Note that there is more information in the footnotes, and in some cases this additional information may also need to be considered when identifying the correct part.

Self-Study Exercises: (Answers below)

Exercise 9: Find the part number for a fuel filter for 124.032-1C-215046.

Hints: Remember to change the VIN prefix to WDB. Look for Fuel System and Fuel Pump.

Exercise 10: Find the part number for the left front window lifter spring in 124.032-1C-215046

Hint: Front door, window regulator

Exercise 11: Find the part number for the screwdriver in the tool kit in 126.039-1A-288398

Hint: Tools

Exercise 12: Find the part number for the screwdriver in a 190 C (110.001)

No Hints!

Exercise 13: Find the part number for the steering box gasket kit for a 116.036 (450 SL 6.9 USA)

Hints: Steering. Green message: Go back to Group and select the “LG Steering” Aggregate, then find the Gasket Kit. Note the symbol used, also note the symbol used for Repair kit (Callout 65)

Exercise 14: Find the part number for the wiper rubber (insert) for an E420.
Hint: Electrical System, Pane Wiper.

Exercise 15: Find the part number for the accelerator pedal for an E420 (Model 210)
Hint: Control

Exercise 16: Find the part number for a Rear Bumper (“Face Bar” portion) in an E420 without AMG package, with Brilliant Silver (Code 744) exterior paint.
Hints: Attachment Parts. Read footnotes carefully, and use what is shown.

Answers:

#9: A 002 477 13 01 or A 002 477 17 01

#10 A 000 768 08 34

#11 A 000 581 03 17

#12 A 000 581 03 17, same as #11!

#13 A 107 460 00 61

#14 A 000 824 55 27

#15 A 220 300 02 04

#16 A 210 880 19 71 without any ES2 color code. Trick Question: Footnote 420 indicates that it must be painted, and no color code footnote is shown, so only order the base number without color code. If you ordered the part with an ES2 code, it would be rejected.