

Mercedes-Benz AG became aware of a potential issue concerning the fuel system on platform 907 Sprinter vehicles in September 2019 through a field complaint, which reported that a customer had observed a diesel leak under the vehicle during fueling.

MBAG initiated its analysis as to the potential cause of the reported case as well as to whether this was an isolated case or the indication of a broader issue.

In October 2019, the investigation shifted to focus on the reassembly process at the US production plant in Charleston (SC).

In the last quarter of 2019 the US production plant initiated a plant action to check and, if necessary, to rework potentially affected vehicles previously held at the plant or on of MBAG's Vehicle Preparation Centers (VPC).

In the beginning of 2020, MBAG identified that 46 vehicles did not have the appropriate documentation confirming the vehicle check and rework had occurred before the vehicle was released from the plant or VPC. MBAG initiated a subsequent investigation into whether these vehicles had in fact received the check and rework or if the documentation was lacking. MBAG later found the vehicles were not checked and reworked as previously planned.

MBAG then initiated its analysis as to the potential consequence of a vehicle that had an open fuel nozzle, including how the condition may impact a vehicle in normal operations and in a crash. The analysis focused on the amount of fuel potentially leaking, whether there was a potential risk of the fuel coming into contact with or leaking onto hot vehicle components, and whether fuel vapor could enter the vehicle's fresh air supply and enter the passenger compartment. Within its analysis, MBAG also considered the effect of certain vehicle options such as under floor covering and the geometric design of the fuel tank to the potential consequences under investigation.

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, plants were shut down and many employees were furloughed during the spring of 2020. The analysis resumed in July 2020 and on July 29, 2020, MBAG decided that it could not rule out the potential for a critical amount of fuel to leak from the vehicle onto the road, and decided to conduct a safety recall.