



Checking coolant level in your naturally aspirated diesel Mercedes W123

Next to oil, coolant is the most important fluid for the health of your engine. Learn to check it, and check it often, to ensure you're keeping your cool.

Written By: Nicolas Siemsen



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INTRODUCTION

This guide applies to earlier style non-turbo diesel engines that do not have a translucent plastic overflow tank for observing coolant level. On these cars the only way to check the coolant level is to remove the radiator cap.



PARTS:

- [Mercedes-Benz Approved Coolant](#) (1)
part # Q1030004
- [Phosphate-free coolant](#) (1)
alternative to Mercedes-Benz coolant

Step 1 — Checking coolant level in your naturally aspirated diesel Mercedes W123



- Before proceeding very carefully check that the coolant temperature is low enough to safely check the coolant level.
- To do this use your hand to carefully check and see how hot the radiator cap is. It should be cool to the touch. If it is hot, or even warm, it is best to wait. If you have recently driven the car it can take several hours before the coolant has cooled enough to check the level.

 Never remove a hot to the touch cap on a radiator. It can lead to rapid and violent discharge of scalding hot coolant which can cause very serious injury.

Step 2



- Once you have verified that the coolant is cool enough to proceed, use the palm of your hand to press down on the radiator cap and turn it counter clockwise.

Step 3



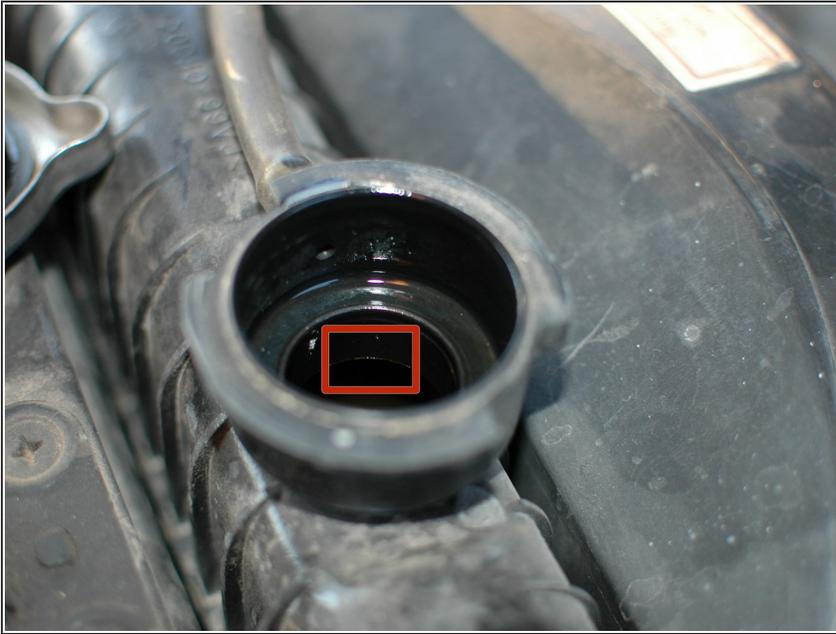
- The cap will turn about 90 degrees counterclockwise; this is the first stop and allows any residual pressure to be released without the cap coming off.
- Continue to turn the cap another approximately 45 degrees until it stops turning.

Step 4



- Pull the cap up and out of the radiator and set it aside.

Step 5



- Look down in to the neck of the radiator. The coolant should reach up or very near to the bottom rim of the neck.
- If the coolant reaches this point the level is fine and the cap can be replaced.

Step 6



- If the coolant is low it should be topped off with half distilled water and half coolant, if using full-strength concentrated coolant.
- ⓘ Use only coolant that is certified for use in Mercedes-Benz engines. These are usually nearly clear, if perhaps a light orange or yellow in color. They are phosphate-free and are designed not to react with certain metals in the engine. You can use Genuine Mercedes-Benz coolant, or an alternative such as the one pictured.
- ⚠ Be aware that if you use regular green coolant it may lead to engine damage in the long term.
- Never mix coolants. If you find your cooling system is filled with green coolant top it off with the same type of coolant but plan to change the coolant out and flush the system in the near future.

Step 7



- Make sure the cap is fully tightened. After your next drive check the cap for leaks and tighten further if necessary.

To reassemble your device, follow these instructions in reverse order.