2014 Mercedes-Benz S550 at 85,000 mi

WDDUG8CB9EA123456

MODEL / CHASSIS	ENGINE	MILEAGE	DRIVETRAIN
S550 · W222 S550 sedan	Mercedes-Benz M278 4.7 biturbo V8 and M157 5.5 AMG V8	85,000 mi	RWD
BUILD MONTH	**REPORT DATE**	**MODE**	**PREPARED FOR**
Not entered (door jamb)	October 27, 2026	Owner	Sample Owner

VIN check: check digit valid; model-year code 'E' = 2014, matches the year entered. The VIN doesn't record the build month. Sample report: synthetic VIN.

1 · SUMMARY

What this car needs, in order

Each item compares this car's mileage with when owners and shops report the part failing. It is not an inspection: a qualified technician decides what the car actually needs.

0	0	4
jobs recommended now	to plan in the next 30,000 miles	to watch or check at each service

Safety recalls NHTSA lists for this model year (4 of 5)

- **23V-854** · Body · front roof panel: The front roof panel ahead of the panoramic sunroof can come loose and fall off, becoming a road hazard.
- **21V-197** · Body · front roof panel: The bonding of the front roof panel ahead of the panoramic sunroof can weaken, so the panel can come off while driving.
- **16V-899** · Steering · power assist control unit: Poor solder joints in the control unit can switch off power steering assist while driving.
- **13V-576** · Seat belts · front anchor: A front seat belt anchor may not be fitted correctly and can come loose in a crash. Built April–October 2013.

A model-year list, not a VIN check. The full report lists the others. Repairs are free at a Mercedes-Benz dealer if open. Check this VIN at nhtsa.gov/recalls.

Step 0 · Free: run the VIN at nhtsa.gov/recalls and ask a Mercedes-Benz dealer for a campaign printout. Read the build month (MM/YY) on the driver's door-jamb label.

Recommended now at the next service

Good news: nothing on the 4.7L M278 biturbo V8 / 5.5L M157 AMG V8 watch list is due at this mileage. Worth a fresh look at about 95,000 mi.

Next 12 months up to about 97,000 mi

Nothing scheduled here.

Within the next 30,000 miles up to 115,000 mi

Nothing else enters its reported range in this window.

Watch inspect at each service, fix on condition, or optional

Catalytic converters (P0420 / P0430) — `Free if covered` check the VIN
Any mileage (MY2011–2020 CL/CLS/E/S/SL 550 (not GL/ML/GLE)) · Ask for this check at every service

Exhaust valve assembly (misfire) — **No published price**
Any mileage (MY2011–2016 V8 models) · Inspect at each service; fix at the first sign

Timing chain tensioners (early engines) — `Free if covered` check the VIN
Any mileage (Early production M278 (2011–2013)) · Inspect at each service; fix at the first sign

Oil leak at cylinder-head oil duct plugs — **No published price**
Any mileage (M278 engines up to serial 2789xx 30 141210) · Inspect at each service; fix at the first sign

Recommended now

No repairs due now

Independent shop, installed. Dealers often charge more.

Planned through 115,000 mi

No repairs planned

Now + next 12 months + next 30,000 miles. Excludes “watch” and optional items.

Costs are published independent-shop ranges (low end + low end, high end + high end). Bundled jobs are priced together because the labor overlaps. Routine service (oil, brakes, tires) isn't included; factory fluid and spark plug intervals are listed below.

FACTORY MAINTENANCE

The maker's maintenance schedule isn't on this report

This report doesn't include the maker's scheduled maintenance for this car yet, so brake fluid, spark plugs, coolant and transmission fluid aren't listed even when they're due. Check the service records and the maker's schedule for this car.

WHERE 85K SITS FOR EACH WEAK POINT

#	WEAK POINT	REPORTED RANGE	THIS CAR
1	Catalytic converters (P0420 / P0430)	MY2011–2020 CL/CLS/E/S/SL 550 (not GL/ML/GLE) OFFICIAL	● Any mileage
2	Exhaust valve assembly (misfire)	MY2011–2016 V8 models OFFICIAL	● Any mileage
3	Timing chain tensioners (early engines)	Early production M278 (2011–2013) OFFICIAL	● Any mileage
4	Oil leak at cylinder-head oil duct plugs	M278 engines up to serial 2789xx 30 141210 OFFICIAL	● Any mileage

Colors compare mileage with reported failures, not the car's condition. Red: past the range. Amber: inside or approaching. Green: below, or not listed for a recall.

2 · RECALLS AND BULLETINS

Recalls to check for this 2014 Mercedes-Benz S550

Safety recall repairs are free at Mercedes-Benz dealers. Nothing here can tell whether a recall is open or already done on this VIN; only the official VIN lookup or a dealer can.

Official VIN check (2 minutes)

1. Go to nhtsa.gov/recalls and enter WDDUG8CB9EA123456.
2. Note every recall shown as “Recall incomplete” and keep a screenshot.
3. Ask a Mercedes-Benz dealer for a campaign printout; it also lists completed campaigns.

4.7L M278 BITURBO V8 / 5.5L M157 AMG V8 RECALLS WE TRACK

Other 4.7L M278 biturbo V8 / 5.5L M157 AMG V8 recalls we track, not listed by NHTSA for this model and year: 12V-557 (fuel filter flange can crack and leak (2011–2012)), 21V-961 (fuel rail to injector leak (2020 SL550)).

EVERY RECALL NHTSA LISTS FOR THE 2014 MERCEDES-BENZ S550 (5)

RECALL	COMPONENT	WHAT CAN HAPPEN (NHTSA, SHORTENED)
23V-854	Body · front roof panel	The front roof panel ahead of the panoramic sunroof can come loose and fall off, becoming a road hazard. Details
21V-197	Body · front roof panel	The bonding of the front roof panel ahead of the panoramic sunroof can weaken, so the panel can come off while driving. Details
16V-899	Steering · power assist control unit	Poor solder joints in the control unit can switch off power steering assist while driving. Details
13V-576	Seat belts · front anchor	A front seat belt anchor may not be fitted correctly and can come loose in a crash. Built April–October 2013. Details
19V-787	Emergency call (eCall)	The emergency call (eCall) system may send the wrong location, which could delay help after a crash. Details

Source: NHTSA recalls API, fetched 2026-10-27 and combined across NHTSA model names: S550. Safety categories (air bags, fire, brakes, stalling, roll-away and loss of control) are listed first; listings whose NHTSA text names another engine, or an aftermarket part, go last. OFFICIAL
Left out of this list (S550): None. The roof-panel recalls (21V-197, 23V-854) apply only to cars with the panoramic sunroof.

SERVICE ACTIONS, BULLETINS AND WARRANTY PROGRAMS

Manufacturer bulletins and warranty programs for this engine are cited on each weak point in section 4, where they apply.

4 · THE 4 WEAK POINTS

Each weak point, one card each

Every figure carries its source. Retailer part numbers are shown only when the retailer lists them for this chassis (W222). Left out because they apply to other models, years, engine sizes or body codes: Boost control: vacuum pump and pressure transducer (AMG 5.5 M157).

1 Catalytic converters (P0420 / P0430)

Any mileage

Severity: High: overheating, stalls, limp mode or a big bill · 1 mentions in counted NHTSA complaints

COMPUTED FROM NHTSA DATA

Reports cover a wide mileage span (MY2011–2020 CL/CLS/E/S/SL 550 (not GL/ML/GLE)), so mileage doesn't say much here. Range: MY2011–2020 CL/CLS/E/S/SL 550 (not GL/ML/GLE) OFFICIAL [2]

WHAT FAILS OFFICIAL [2]

Sulfur contamination can make the catalytic converters fail their efficiency test and turn on the check-engine light (P0420/P0430). Mercedes extended coverage to 10 years/120k (13 years/156k on 2011 models).

SYMPTOMS

- Check-engine light with P0420 or P0430
- Failed emissions test

IF IT'S LEFT TOO LONG

The car fails inspection; no driveability problem by itself.

IS IT WORTH DOING EARLY? OUR ESTIMATE

Check the VIN for the extended warranty first; it may still cover 2016–2020 cars.

ESTIMATED REPAIR COST

Free under the M278 catalyst extended warranty while in time/mileage	**Free if covered** OFFICIAL [2] independent shop, installed
No published bill outside the program	**No published price** reported range for the bill after a failure
Dealer	**Often 1.5–2× the independent-shop price** OUR ESTIMATE

PARTS FOR W222

- Ask your parts supplier for the OE part number for this VIN.

WHAT TO ASK YOUR SHOP

- Any catalyst codes?
- Catalysts replaced under the extension?

2 Exhaust valve assembly (misfire)

Any mileage

Severity: High: overheating, stalls, limp mode or a big bill · 3 mentions in counted NHTSA complaints

COMPUTED FROM NHTSA DATA

Reports cover a wide mileage span (MY2011–2016 V8 models), so mileage doesn't say much here. Range: MY2011–2016 V8 models OFFICIAL [3]

WHAT FAILS OFFICIAL [3]

ESTIMATED REPAIR COST

The exhaust valve assembly may not work properly and cause a misfire and a check-engine light. Mercedes extended coverage to 10 years/120k (12 years on 2011 models); most of that coverage has now ended.

SYMPTOMS

- Misfire
- Flashing or steady check-engine light
- Rough running

IF IT'S LEFT TOO LONG

Misfires can overheat the catalytic converters.

IS IT WORTH DOING EARLY? OUR ESTIMATE

Diagnose any misfire early; check the VIN for open coverage.

No published price	**No published price** independent shop, installed
No published bill outside the program	**No published price** reported range for the bill after a failure
Dealer	**Often 1.5–2× the independent-shop price** OUR ESTIMATE

PARTS FOR W222

- Ask your parts supplier for the OE part number for this VIN.

WHAT TO ASK YOUR SHOP

- Any misfire codes?
- Cylinder head work done?

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3 Timing chain tensioners (early engines)

Any mileage

Severity: High: overheating, stalls, limp mode or a big bill · 3 mentions in counted NHTSA complaints

COMPUTED FROM NHTSA DATA

Reports cover a wide mileage span (Early production M278 (2011–2013)), so mileage doesn't say much here. Range: Early production M278 (2011–2013) OFFICIAL [4][8]

WHAT FAILS OFFICIAL [4][8]

On some 2013 engines the secondary chain-tensioner check valves were pressed in too deep, which can starve the cylinder heads of oil; Mercedes removes them under a service campaign. Early engines are also known for a cold-start chain rattle.

SYMPTOMS

- Rattle for a few seconds after a cold start
- Camshaft position codes (P0016/P0017)

IF IT'S LEFT TOO LONG

A worn or starved chain drive can jump and damage the engine.

IS IT WORTH DOING EARLY? OUR ESTIMATE

Check that campaign 2013010001 is done; investigate any start-up rattle.

ESTIMATED REPAIR COST

Free under service campaign 2013010001 (2013 engines) if not done	**Free if covered** OFFICIAL [4] independent shop, installed
No published price	**No published price** reported range for the bill after a failure
Dealer	**Often 1.5–2× the independent-shop price** OUR ESTIMATE

PARTS FOR W222

- Ask your parts supplier for the OE part number for this VIN.

WHAT TO ASK YOUR SHOP

- Campaign 2013010001 done?
- Any rattle at cold start?

4 Oil leak at cylinder-head oil duct plugs

Any mileage

Severity: Medium: leaks and wear · 4 mentions in counted NHTSA complaints

COMPUTED FROM NHTSA DATA

Reports cover a wide mileage span (M278 engines up to serial 2789xx 30 141210), so mileage doesn't say much here. Range: M278 engines up to serial 2789xx 30 141210 OFFICIAL [5]

WHAT FAILS OFFICIAL [5]

Scoring in the oil passage at the check-ball plug lets oil seep from the cylinder heads (left side beside the vacuum pump, right side below the high-pressure pump). Mercedes fits a pin into the passage.

SYMPTOMS

- Oil wetness on the cylinder heads
- Burning-oil smell

IF IT'S LEFT TOO LONG

Oil can drip onto hot exhaust parts.

IS IT WORTH DOING EARLY? OUR ESTIMATE

Reseal when wet.

ESTIMATED REPAIR COST

No published price	**No published price** independent shop, installed
No published bill	**No published price** reported range for the bill after a failure
Dealer	**Often 1.5–2× the independent-shop price** OUR ESTIMATE

PARTS FOR W222

- Ask your parts supplier for the OE part number for this VIN.

WHAT TO ASK YOUR SHOP

- Any oil leaks or smell?

5 · ALSO REPORTED, NOT RANKED

Other themes in 4.7L M278 biturbo V8 / 5.5L M157 AMG V8 owner complaints

Every NHTSA complaint theme with 10 or more counted reports is either a weak point above or explained here.

THEME	COMPLAINTS	WHY IT ISN'T A WEAK POINT
Stalling / loss of power	15	Mixed causes in the complaint text; not one engine fault.

6 · BUYING OR SELLING

Used-car checklist and resale helper

For owners this is a resale checklist: it's what a careful buyer will ask.

Ask the inspecting shop to check

- Stored catalyst, misfire and boost codes
- Cold-start rattle
- Oil at the cylinder-head plugs and vacuum pump

Ask the seller

- Catalysts or exhaust valves replaced under the extensions?
- Campaign 2013010001 done (2013 cars)?

Documents to request

- Dealer service-history printout for the VIN (shows campaigns and extended-warranty repairs)
- nhtsa.gov/recalls screenshot

WHAT A BUYER MAY DEDUCT

FINDING	ESTIMATED ADJUSTMENT
Catalytic converters (P0420 / P0430): fault found on inspection	No published price
Exhaust valve assembly (misfire): symptoms or fault codes present	No published price
Timing chain tensioners (early engines): symptoms or fault codes present	Free if covered
Oil leak at cylinder-head oil duct plugs: seeping or leaking	No published price
Pre-ticked rows (●), if no records clear them	**None at this mileage**

● = expected at this mileage. Estimated repair costs, not an appraisal. Recalls cost the seller nothing: ask for open recalls to be completed rather than discounted. OUR ESTIMATE

7 · METHOD AND SOURCES

How this report is built

Inputs. VIN, model year, model, mileage and build month (if entered). Model and engine are checked with NHTSA's vPIC decoder.

Mileage positions. Below: more than 10,000 miles before the reported range. Approaching: within 10,000. Inside: in the range, or past the start of an open-ended range. Past: beyond the top of the range. These bands are our rules, not an industry standard.

The plan. Critical items inside or past their range go first; high-severity items follow, and jobs that share labor are bundled. At most three jobs land in “Recommended now”. Leaks that are cheap to watch are fixed on condition; inspections are asked for at each service.

Costs. Published independent-shop ranges from shop quotes, retailer prices and owner reports. The worst-case cost of every item failing is not shown: it isn't an expected cost.

Labels. OFFICIAL NHTSA/Mercedes-Benz documents · SHOP/RETAILER parts prices and shop articles · FORUM/BLOG owner forums and blogs · COMPUTED FROM NHTSA DATA our analysis of NHTSA data · OUR ESTIMATE ours.

NHTSA complaint data. Pulled Oct 27, 2026 from NHTSA's complaints API for E-, S-, CL-, CLS-, GL/GLS-, ML/GLE- and SL-Class complaints that name a 550 or 63 model or the 4.6/4.7/5.5L V8 (NHTSA files Mercedes-Benz complaints by class): 191 complaints. Some of these nameplates were sold with other engines too; for those we left out complaints whose text names another engine or a hybrid, so a few complaints about other engines can remain. Themes are keyword matches on the complaint text. Small complaint pool: most owners name the class, not the engine. COMPUTED FROM NHTSA DATA

THEME	COMPLAINTS	IN THIS REPORT
Stalling / loss of power	15	Also reported
Oil leak	4	Item 4
Misfire	3	Item 2
Timing chain noise	3	Item 3
Boost / limp mode	2	Other years or engine sizes
Catalyst codes	1	Item 1

Limits: complaints are self-reported and not adjusted for cars sold; keyword matching over- and under-counts; owners rarely file safety complaints about oil seeps, so leaks look rarer than they are.

SOURCES

1. NHTSA owner complaints for 2012–2016 E550/E63, 2011–2017 S550/S63, CL550/CL63, 2012–2018 CLS550/CLS63, 2013–2016 GL450/550/63, 2017–2019 GLS550/63, ML550/ML63, GLE550/63 and SL550/SL63 complaints, pulled Oct 27, 2026 (ODI numbers in the cost notes) OFFICIAL
https://www.nhtsa.gov/report-a-safety-problem#complaints

2. Mercedes-Benz NCU Emission Extended Warranty – M278 Catalyst: MY2011–2020 CL, CLS, E, S and SL 550: catalytic converter coverage extended to 10–13 years (P0420/P0430, sulfur contamination) (2023-07-27), filed with NHTSA OFFICIAL
https://static.nhtsa.gov/odi/tsbs/2023/MC-10240203-0001.pdf

3. Mercedes-Benz Owner letter – Exhaust Valve Assembly: MY2011–2016 V8 CL/CLS/S/E/ML/SL/G/GL/GLE: exhaust valve assembly coverage extended to 10–12 years/120k (misfire) (2023-03-30), filed with NHTSA OFFICIAL
https://static.nhtsa.gov/odi/tsbs/2023/MC-10233794-0001.pdf

4. Mercedes-Benz Service campaign 2013010001: MY2013 M278: remove check valve for left and right secondary chain tensioners (2013-02-01), filed with NHTSA OFFICIAL
https://static.nhtsa.gov/odi/tsbs/2013/MC-10135792-9999.pdf

5. Mercedes-Benz LI01.30-P-058630: Engine oil leak at oil duct of left or right cylinder head (engines 157, 276, 278) (2014-03-21), filed with NHTSA OFFICIAL
https://static.nhtsa.gov/odi/tsbs/2014/MC-10167487-9999.pdf

6. Mercedes-Benz EW – Vacuum Pump / Pressure Transducer M157: MY2015–2019 M157 (AMG 5.5): pressure transducer, vacuum pump and vacuum lines covered to 15 yr/150k (boost faults, limp mode) (2026-03-13), filed with NHTSA OFFICIAL
https://static.nhtsa.gov/odi/tsbs/2026/MC-11030069-0001.pdf

7. Mercedes-Benz LI09.00-P-074093: MY15+ M278 and M157: fault code P023400, boost pressure too high (2021-12-08), filed with NHTSA OFFICIAL
https://static.nhtsa.gov/odi/tsbs/2021/MC-10206077-0001.pdf

8. Euro Premium Parts: Mercedes-Benz M278 engine guide (timing-chain tensioners on early engines, cold-start rattle, P0016/P0017) (via search extract Oct 27, 2026) SHOP/RETAILER
https://europremiumparts.com/en-ca/blogs/buying-guides/mercedes-benz-m278-engine-guide-reliability-common-problems-tuning-potential

9. NHTSA recall records: 12V-557 and 21V-961, checked Oct 27, 2026 OFFICIAL
https://www.nhtsa.gov/recalls?nhtsaId=12V557000

This report contains no affiliate links; retailer prices are quoted as price sources only. Found an error? Email hello@repairahead.com.

PLEASE READ

Important

Based on public records and published repair costs. Not a diagnosis or a guarantee. Your technician's inspection decides what your car needs. Confirm recalls with a dealer using your VIN.

Informational only. This report is not a mechanical inspection, a diagnosis, or professional, legal or financial advice. Nobody from RepairAhead has seen, driven or inspected this vehicle.

Reported ranges and estimates, not predictions

Failure mileages are reported ranges compiled from public owner complaints, manufacturer bulletins, recalls and repair-shop reports. Costs are estimates. Parts can fail earlier, later or not at all, and other problems can occur. Statistics from owner complaints describe past reports to NHTSA; NHTSA has not reviewed or endorsed this analysis.

Safety issues go to a dealer

If you notice overheating, a burning or fuel smell, smoke, a brake-assist problem, stalling or loss of power, pull over when it's safe and contact a Mercedes-Benz dealer or qualified shop. Safety recall repairs are free at Mercedes-Benz dealers. Confirm recalls for this VIN at nhtsa.gov/recalls.

No warranty

Provided “as is”, without warranties of any kind, under the Terms of Use at repairahead.com/terms.

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Wrong input (VIN, mileage, build date)? Email hello@repairahead.com with report ID RA-M278-123456-20261027 and we'll correct and reissue it.

Based on public records and published repair costs. Not a diagnosis or a guarantee. Your technician's inspection decides what your car needs. Confirm recalls with a dealer using your VIN.