



Press briefing

BILSTEIN makes it possible to convert original air or ABC suspension systems to steel spring suspension systems for Mercedes-Benz W220 and C215

Fair market value repair solution from R-Customs

Essen / Ennepetal, 24 September 2025 – Modern classic cars are becoming increasingly popular with many motorists. One of the reasons for this is certainly that, compared to “real” vintage cars, these vehicles are still quite affordable. However, the relatively low prices can quickly turn into a financial trap if costly repairs are required. Especially with technically sophisticated models, such as the various versions of the Mercedes-Benz S-Class, necessary repairs can quickly turn into a total economic loss.

Many of these models were already equipped with air or ABC (Active Body Control) suspensions during their production period (1998–2005). At the end of their technical service life, the air suspensions (Airmatic) now tend to leak and suffer compressor damage. Although these repairs are technically manageable, they often fail due to poor availability of original spare parts. The situation is much more critical with ABC suspension systems, which are designed to suppress roll movements during acceleration, braking, or fast cornering. This complex electro-hydraulic system is prone to loss of hydraulic oil and frequent electronic faults in the control system. This damage is safety-relevant and can lead to the vehicle breaking down or being taken off the road by the authorities. In addition to the W220 model series, this also affects the CL C215 coupé variant based on the same platform, which was delivered ex-factory exclusively with ABC suspensions.

S-Class W220 and CL-Class C215 now mean steel class at R-Customs and BILSTEIN

In cooperation with the BILSTEIN Customisation Programme (KSW), BILSTEIN and R-Customs have reissued a repair solution that impresses with its exceptional price/performance ratio: The components of the air or ABC suspension are replaced with steel suspension or mechanical components. R-Customs offers complete conversion kits for the Airmatic or ABC versions. In addition to the BILSTEIN B12 complete suspension, which has been specially adjusted for the W220 and C215 models, the ABC version also includes mechanical stabilisers (radius rods) and coupling bars. Both kits also contain deactivation modules for the on-board electronic system.

These conversion kits not only offer a durable and cost-effective repair alternative, but also provide additional benefits that are particularly important for lovers of modern classic cars:

- The conversion complies with the standard of the S-Class models with steel suspension at that time. Thus, the car becomes an “original steel” model, which will enable it to obtain an H registration plate also, in the future. Comfort and driving characteristics are at the level of the S-Class at that time.
- A parts certificate already allows for problem-free entry in the vehicle documents.
- Long-term value retention and resale potential of the car are guaranteed, as only OE-quality components are used and there will be no need for expensive suspension repairs in the future.

Availability and scope of work

The conversion of the W220 and C215 to the new steel class is now possible, and the conversion kits can be ordered from R-Customs: <https://r-customs.onepage.me/mercedes-abc>

Suitable for the following models:

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- Mercedes-Benz W220: S350, S420, S500, S550, S600, S55 AMG
- Mercedes-Benz C215: CL500, CL550, CL 600, CL55 AMG

Airmatic conversion

- Working time approx. four hours, plus wheel alignment
- Replacement of air spring units with BILSTEIN B12 complete suspension
- Connection of the deactivation module to the Airmatic control unit

ABC conversion

- Working time approx. nine to ten hours, plus wheel alignment
- Removal of ABC lines and valve units
- Replacement of the servo pump
- Replacement of the suspension struts and hydraulic cylinders with a BILSTEIN B12 complete suspension
- Connection of the deactivation module to the ABC control unit
- Installation of the servo line to the new pump without tension

The conversion should only be carried out by a specialist workshop or a suitably experienced person.

Image:



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About BILSTEIN

BILSTEIN is part of thyssenkrupp AG and has its headquarters in Ennepetal, Germany. The company develops and produces chassis, shock absorbers and springs for cars and vans and is one of the world's largest suppliers with an annual production of around 13 million shock absorbers. BILSTEIN is a technology leader and a global player with more than 4,100 employees at nine locations in six countries – including the UK, the USA, Romania, China and Mexico.

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