

Mercedes-Benz C180 W204

2007-2014 · 1.6/1.8L M271/M274 supercharged and turbocharged petrol (156 hp)

Est. annual maintenance cost: €800-1,600

Date _____ Mileage _____ Price _____ Seller _____

What matters most: Three engine variants share the C180 badge. Pre-2010 Kompressor models carry the highest timing chain risk. Ask which engine is fitted and whether the chain has been inspected.

BEFORE THE VIEWING

Recall status (ESL + airbags)

Call a Mercedes dealer with the VIN to check open recalls. The electronic steering lock (ESL) recall is critical, as failure locks the steering and prevents starting without warning.

Service records and oil spec

Ask for full service history. Confirm oil specification MB 229.3 or 229.5 was used. Cars serviced at Mercedes dealers or known specialists are easier to verify.

Identify the engine variant

The C180 badge covers three engines: M271 Kompressor (2007-2010), M271 EVO CGI (2010-2012), and M274 (2012-2014). Each has different weak points, so confirm which one before visiting.

AT THE CAR

Tyres and exterior condition

Check tyre tread depth and date codes on 205/55R16 or 225/45R17 tyres. Front tyres wear faster on cars with sport suspension. Look for uneven wear that can point to alignment issues.

Cold start chain rattle

Start the engine completely cold and listen for metallic rattling in the first 5 to 30 seconds. This is the key test for timing chain wear on M271 engines (pre-2012). Even a brief rattle is worth noting.

Oil level and camshaft magnets

Check the dipstick for oil level and colour. Then look at the two camshaft adjuster solenoids on the front of the engine for oil seepage around the electrical connectors. Oil here can migrate to the ECU.

Rear subframe corrosion

If the car was driven in Northern Europe with salted roads, check the rear subframe from below for rust bubbling, flaking, or soft spots. Internal corrosion is hard to spot but structurally serious.

DURING THE DRIVE

Automatic gearbox behaviour

On 7G-Tronic cars, pay attention to shifts during acceleration and coasting. Harsh or delayed shifts, or the gearbox holding a gear too long, can point to conductor plate wear. Manual cars are not affected.

Engine response and idle quality

On 2010+ direct injection models, check for hesitation under acceleration and rough idle when warm. These symptoms can point to carbon buildup on the intake valves, which costs around 400 to 600 euros to clean.

Dashboard warnings and temperature

Watch the temperature gauge for fluctuations, especially on 2012-2014 M274 cars where the electronic thermostat can fail. Note any warning lights that appear during the drive, even if they clear on their own.

NOTES

THIS CAR AT A GLANCE

Entry-level petrol W204 C-Class, built 2007-2014. The timing chain and electronic steering lock are the main concerns.

KNOWN WEAK POINTS

Timing chain (M271)

Chain stretch, cold start rattle, 80-150k km

€1,500-3,000

Electronic steering lock

Motor wears out, car won't start

€400-1,200

Camshaft adjuster leak

Oil seeps into wiring toward ECU

€200-800

7G-Tronic conductor plate

Harsh shifts, limp mode, 80-150k km

€1,000-2,500

Rear subframe corrosion

Hidden rust in salt-road climates

€800-2,500

