British victims of Mercedes diesel emissions scandal in line for significant compensation after £1.7billion US settlement

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One million drivers in England and Wales are a significant step closer to receiving compensation after the automaker agreed to pay £1.7billion ($2.2billion) to settle claims that vehicles sold in the United States were programmed to cheat on emissions tests.

Law firm PGMBM, who have filed a group litigation claim in Liverpool High Court against Daimler AG, the parent company of Mercedes-Benz UK, related to this diesel emissions scandal, have welcomed the US settlement but believe that ***British drivers may be entitled to 'far heftier' compensation*** – with potential liability of £10billion for Daimler.

PGMBM have revealed that ***over 65,000 affected drivers in England and Wales have already signed up to a class-action claim against the German company*** – but they believe that the scandal may impact up to one million drivers, including consumers who have bought or leased vehicles, and those operating single commercial vehicles and fleets.

Daimler on Thursday announced that it had reached an agreement in principle with various US authorities to settle civil and environmental claims regarding emission control systems of diesel passenger cars and vans, as well as agreements in principle to settle a consumer class action pending before US courts.

In a statement, Daimler said that it expected costs of £1.14bn ($1.5bn) relating to the civil and environmental claims and £535m ($700m) relating to the consumer class action – but lawyers leading the case say that impacted drivers in Britain case expect much more.

Thomas Goodhead, Managing Partner at PGMBM, said: "We welcome the news that a compensation package has been agreed in principle in the US but Mercedes have really gotten off very lightly there. This is a tacit admission that they abused the trust of their customers by egregiously misleading them in the pursuit of profit.

"The class-action case against Mercedes gives the opportunity for us to hold Mercedes to account for its unlawful and deceitful actions, and we are very confident that consumers here will be entitled to far heftier compensation. They have been mis-sold their vehicles. The vehicles didn't do what they said on the tin.

"Legally, consumers could be entitled to anything up to the full cost of the vehicles in question. Based on other similar legal actions around the world, we believe that £10,000 per claimant should be expected."

Mercedes-Benz allegedly misled customers, the public and authorities concerning the amount of toxic emissions produced by certain models of their diesel cars and vans produced between 2007 and 2018, according to legal papers filed by PGMBM at Liverpool High Court in May of this year.

In order to cheat emissions regulations, the German company is suspected of installing 'defeat devices' in hundreds of thousands of vehicles, allowing vehicles to pass emissions testing. The claim filed by PGMBM alleges that Mercedes committed a fraud by manufacturing cars and vans whose real world diesel emissions exceed the limits imposed by EU and UK laws by up to 10 times.

A defeat device detects when the engine is being tested and limits the amount of nitrogen oxide (NOx) emissions produced to comply with regulatory standards, which would not be in effect in the course of normal road use by vehicle drivers. Nitrogen oxide is a significant factor in air pollution and respiratory conditions, particularly in young and vulnerable people.

In July 2017, Daimler instituted a voluntary recall of 3 million of its diesel vehicles manufactured to Euro 5 and Euro 6 emissions standards. Then in 2018, Germany's motor authority Kraftfahrt-Bundesamt found that some 280,000 Mercedes-Benz vehicles had been outfitted with illegal defeat devices. This led to a wider recall of 670,000 affected vehicles across Europe. As part of a settlement with German prosecutors over its diesel emissions scandal, Daimler AG was fined €870 million in 2019.

There are currently tens of thousands of cases involving Mercedes-Benz's actions pending in courts

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around the world, including claims for damages and the right to return the vehicle without any financial losses by the owner. Damages awarded have typically been over £10,000 per vehicle.

PGMBM estimate that up to half a million vehicles in the UK could be affected, with an average of two owners each. This means that the case may impact one million consumers and, based on potential damages of £10,000 in each case, Mercedes-Benz may face £10billion in compensation claims if they are found liable.

PGMBM have urged consumers in the UK to come forward and join the class action claim if they purchased, financed or leased a Mercedes diesel car or van, manufactured between 2007 and 2018, to join the claim on a no win, no fee basis, which they can do via a simple online form at mercedesclaimlawyers.com. By joining the action, claimants have the greatest chance of ensuring compensation and achieving justice.

This is not the first time that the world has seen car makers deceive consumers and cause enormous environmental damage. Recently, UK courts ruled against Volkswagen for cheating the emissions testing regime. PGMBM successfully litigated in this case, establishing liability in favour of around 91,000 claimants.

Higher emissions of NOx pollutants can cause an increase in fuel and maintenance costs, as well as impairing vehicle performance. Moreover, toxic diesel emissions are extremely harmful to people, especially children. The Royal College of Physicians claim that illegal levels of air pollution result in over 40,000 early deaths per year.

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Notes to editors:

To make a claim or for more information regarding the Mercedes Diesel Fraud class-action, visit: mercedesclaimlawyers.com.

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