

Front Suspension

MERCEDES-BENZ 380SL & 380SLC

DESCRIPTION

Front suspension assembly is a coil spring type, having separately mounted coil springs and shock absorbers between upper and lower control arms. Other front suspension components include steering knuckle, tie rods and a stabilizer bar. Steering knuckle is attached at top and bottom with ball joints.

ADJUSTMENTS

WHEEL ALIGNMENT SPECIFICATIONS & PROCEDURES

See *Wheel Alignment Specifications and Procedures* in WHEEL ALIGNMENT section.

WHEEL BEARING

1) Rotate hub and tighten clamp nut until hub can just be turned. Loosen clamp nut and release bearing tension by striking steering knuckle spindle with soft mallet.

2) Using a dial indicator, check wheel bearing end play. End play should be .0004-.0008" (.01-.02 mm). Adjust clamp nut until end play is within limits. Tighten socket bolt of clamp nut. Washer between outer bearing and clamp nut should rotate when light pressure is applied.

BALL JOINT CHECKING

Check ball joint lateral and vertical movement. If any measurable lateral movement is observed, replace ball joint. Correct excessive or insufficient vertical movement by adding or removing washers.

REMOVAL & INSTALLATION

SHOCK ABSORBER

Removal

With vehicle on floor, detach upper and lower shock absorber mountings. Compress shock absorber to gain clearance and remove from vehicle.

NOTE: Shock absorber attachments are not to be loosened or tightened unless vehicle is resting on floor or axle is supported enough to simulate full vehicle load.

Installation

To install, reverse removal procedures.

WHEEL BEARING

Information not available from manufacturer.

COIL SPRING

Removal

1) Loosen lower shock absorber mounting and stabilizer bar connecting linkage. Raise vehicle and support with safety stands. Remove wheel assembly.

2) Mark position of lower control arm eccentric bolts on inner end of arm for reinstallation reference. Attach and engage coil spring compressor. Remove eccentric bolts.

3) Place cradle support beneath lower control arm directly below coil spring position. Slowly lower cradle

support, allowing inner end of control arm to drop down, and remove coil spring.

Installation

To install, reverse removal procedure, fully tightening stabilizer bar mountings and lower shock absorber mounting after vehicle is resting on floor.

STEERING KNUCKLE

Removal

1) Install coil spring compressor on spring. Raise vehicle and support with safety stands. Remove wheel assembly.

2) Remove bolt holding steering knuckle arm to steering knuckle. Detach flexible brake hose from brake line and plug openings. Remove caliper.

NOTE: On some models, it may be possible to remove caliper from rotor and support it out of the way, without detaching brake hose. This will eliminate necessity of bleeding brake system after installation.

3) Remove nuts from upper and lower ball joint studs. Force both ball joints from steering knuckle. Remove steering knuckle.

Installation

To install, reverse removal procedure, bleed brakes and check wheel alignment.

UPPER CONTROL ARM

Removal

1) Attach spring compressor to coil spring. Raise vehicle and support with safety stands. Remove wheel assembly. Shock absorber remains installed.

2) Remove bolt holding steering knuckle to steering knuckle arm. Detach brake hose from brake line and plug openings.

3) Remove nuts from upper and lower ball joint studs. Using separator tool, detach upper ball joint from steering knuckle.

4) Remove both upper control arm mounting nuts and remove arm.

Installation

To install, reverse removal procedure. Bleed brakes and check wheel alignment.

LOWER CONTROL ARM

Removal

1) Loosen and detach lower shock absorber mounting. Raise vehicle and support with safety stands. Remove wheel assembly.

2) Detach steering knuckle arm from steering knuckle. Separate brake hose from brake line and plug openings. Remove coil spring as previously described.

3) Remove nuts from upper and lower ball joint studs. Detach lower control arm from lower ball joint. Remove control arm.

Installation

To install, reverse removal procedures. Bleed brake system. Tighten shock absorber mounting bolts after vehicle is resting on floor. Check wheel alignment.

STABILIZER BAR

Removal

Loosen stabilizer bar connecting linkage from both lower control arms. Remove stabilizer bar-to-frame mounting brackets and remove stabilizer bar.

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NOTE: Stabilizer bar attachments are not to be loosened or tightened unless vehicle is resting on floor or axle is supported enough to simulate full vehicle load.

Installation

To install, reverse removal procedure.

TIGHTENING SPECIFICATIONS

Application	Ft. Lbs. (N.m)
Shock Absorber Lower Mount	14 (19)
Upper & Lower Ball Joint Nut	29 (39)
Tie Rod End Nut	14 (19)
Lower Control Arm-to-Frame	130 (177)
Steering Arm-to-Steering Knuckle	57 (78)
Upper Control Arm Clamping Bolt	21 (29)
Upper Control Arm-to-Body	60 (82)