

Tonneau Cover Lift Cylinders

Level of difficulty: Fairly easy – very rewarding!

Tools needed:

- Flat screwdriver
- Rags or paper towels
- (recommended: magnetic parts tray to hold clips)



For inspection only:

- No tools required, and only a few minutes to open the tonneau cover, lift the soft top rear, and look at the cylinders...

Use as a guideline only – apply common sense, be careful, and wear protective gear!
Top Hydraulics, Inc. is not responsible or liable for personal injury or material damage.

Mercedes R129 Tonneau Cover Lock Cylinder Removal Guide, page 1 of 7

1. Open the tonneau cover.
(If your tonneau cover should not open or unlock automatically, you can unlock it with the MB supplied tool with the 5-mm Allen wrench at one end. The tonneau cover unlocking bolt is hiding between the roll bar and the rear seat side panel...)



2. Raise the soft top, and keep the rear of the soft top raised.
3. Inspection for leaks:



cover lift cylinder...)

(Passenger side rear lock, next to tonneau

The tonneau cover lift cylinders are mounted upright, and they have a groove below the point from which they would be leaking. If you don't find any oil at first, cycle the roof a few times and check again!

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Once the leak is substantial enough, the oil will work its way down the front of the trunk, eventually dripping behind your rear tires. Your hydraulic system may eventually not work properly when the hydraulic fluid level gets too low, and the cylinders cannot develop enough pressure. Your hydraulic pump may suffer damage when working with low fluid levels.

The seal material used in the OEM cylinders is usually rated for a shelf lifetime of 10 years (replacement cylinders at your dealer may have been on the shelf for awhile already...), and has been designed into the system at the latest in the 1980s. Top Hydraulics, Inc. uses enhanced, more modern seals that provide for extended use, while making an excellent seal.

The picture below shows the top of a tonneau cover lift cylinder that is not leaking: the grooved surface is clean and oil free...

Once either the rear lock cylinder or the tonneau lift cylinder leak substantially, the oil will naturally drain down the front of your trunk and end up behind your tire. Thus, if you already have oil spots behind your rear tire, this could be from the rear locking cylinder, as well as the tonneau lift cylinder...



(No oil in top groove)

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4. Start the tonneau cover lift cylinder removal with an empty trunk. Remove the windscreen cover, if equipped. Removal of the CD player can be avoided, but is optional.



5. Remove fuse panel cover on the trunk's front wall: open it, and carefully unclip it.



6. Remove the floor mat and the battery cover/passenger side trim panel by unscrewing the clip on the top (if the clip still exists in your car...).



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7. To remove the carpeted panels in the front and on the driver side of the trunk, remove all panel clips holding them down. The clips are secured with pins that need to be pushed out with a flat screwdriver first.

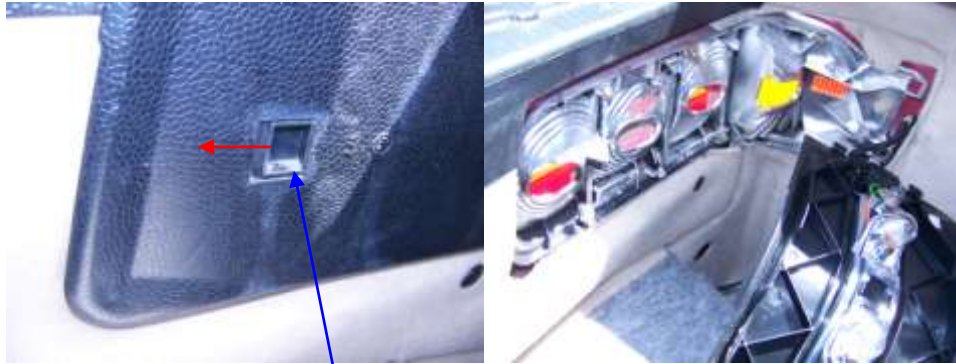


8. Removal of the side panel on the driver side can be cumbersome if there is a CD changer installed. You can work on the lock and/or tonneau lift cylinder removal by only bending the panel back to make enough room. Even the front panel does not have to be removed completely; it has to be pulled back on the passenger side, though, as shown in the picture below...



9. (If you want to 'play it safe', then remove the CD changer, remove the left tail light assembly, and pull out the left carpeted trunk panel)

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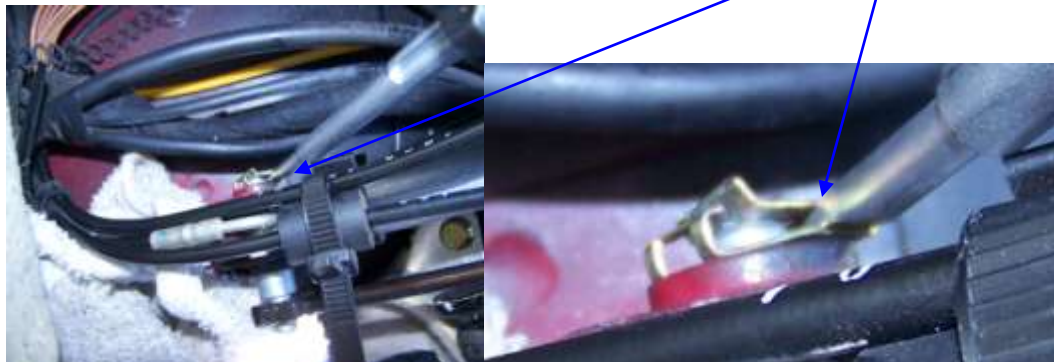
(Pull the spring-loaded latch of the tail light assembly, swing the assembly open, and remove it.)

10. Remove the c-clip on top of the tonneau lift cylinder, slide the cylinder off its pivot pin, and push the piston all the way down (to avoid it getting scratched).



(Remove the c-clip)

11. Remove retaining clip on lower cylinder pivot bolt by pushing the center spring up and sliding the clip over the pin.



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12. Remove the hydraulic line clips and place a rag under the cylinder. Make sure not to loose the clips; MB does not sell them separately! Carefully twist the hydraulic lines out of the cylinder, and wrap them in the rag.
13. Wrap the cylinder in a rag and remove from trunk. Carefully remove remaining oil from the cylinder by repeatedly extending and retracting the piston. Make sure to either have the hydraulic line receptacles covered with a rag, or to squirt the oil into an oil collection container. Watch out, the oil sprays pretty far and wide!

Replace in reverse order. Remember all electrical connections and the clips on the hydraulic lines... The air will eventually be vented from the system, after you have cycled it a number of times.

Remember to wrap the cylinders carefully when shipping to us, so that the pistons do not get scratched during transport.

For repair and/or seal replacement, ship cylinders to:

Top Hydraulics, Inc.
90730 Southview Lane
Florence, OR 97439
USA

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