

fire extinguisher mail to bmw ag

Dear Madam or Sir,

I would appreciate it if you could transfer my mail to your technical department, especially product design / engineering department, regarding my following complaint as soon as possible.

My name is Vassilis Mantas and I live in Athens, Greece.

I was recently in the happy position to be delivered my brand new BMW 320i coupe (E92), about 20 days ago.

I had ordered it with some individual features so the time of waiting was long enough but honestly I was really paid back when I have first driven my car.

When I officially received the car, I noticed that there was no fire extinguisher in the standard features list of the car, and since I consider it as a must have feature for safety reasons, I ordered one via the official sales network where I also purchased the car. I admit the fact that I had to pay for such a safety accessory was astonishing, considering also my experience I had a year ago with my wife's car, a Mercedes C class. Fire extinguisher was a standard part in the equipment list of the car and car delivered with the extinguisher under the driver's seat. So accordingly when I asked by the salesman which version of extinguisher I would like to have the stand alone or the one with the base to be installed under the seat, I picked the second choice having in mind the wise installation in Mercedes car.

So after a few days, specifically last Friday 31/10/08 I was noticed to pass by for the fire extinguisher installation at network's garage. I did promptly, I have waited about 2 ½ hours to be installed as I was told that it is needed the driver's seat to be taken out of the car so the fire extinguisher can be installed properly according to manufacturer's (BMW) guideline.

Anyway after that I received my car. I opened the door to get in and then I had the worst surprise I could get. The extinguisher is extending over the seat in an abnormal way to my point of view. I tried to seat in and as expected my feet were interfering with the fire extinguisher. As at the moment I didn't have available time to study further the situation, I was only assured by the technicians that they performed the installation according to the manufacturer's guideline. I left the garage and I renewed my appointment for next Thursday 06/11/08 for either to find a better way to install it or to remove it and keep it as a standalone device which was not my original intention as I had already at the hood one standalone fire extinguisher.

For better understanding of the situation I have attached a presentation with photos of my car and some photos of my wife's car (Mercedes C class, MY 2007) so anyone can check the situation and have a direct comparison of the solutions.

I really hope and expect this to be a misunderstanding of the local technicians. I cannot even think that my colleagues in BMW have done such an ergonomic mistake. I am writing the word 'colleagues' as I have also worked as a product design engineer for years in a German international manufacturing company, and I am aware of engineering discipline. Recently I have started an academic career as a professor in a Greek Technical University, in Mechanical Engineering department, teaching Engineering Design. Honestly I wouldn't like to find myself showing my car and this case as an example of a failure design!

So please respond to me as soon as possible, especially in case there is a solution to have the part installed in the right way, so on Thursday I can pass your info to the technicians to do the job.

In case it is an accidental failure design (sic!) at least be aware of this now, and when you have a solution give me please a notice. Until then at least protect the rest of your customers.

Rest data for your records, car was purchased in Greece, via a well known distributor, Sfakianakis SA, and I am really satisfied so far by the service of the salespeople and technicians there.

I could even tolerate a lack of training of the technicians regarding use of the right parts for the installation. What is intolerable for me is that BMW design engineers could ever propose this solution to the customers.

Hope that you understand my situation, seeking to receive your feedback as soon as possible. Still keeping my trustful feelings to the company and its people.

Best regards,

Vassilis Mantas