



B0021

Left Side Deployment Stage 1 Control

B0021 indicates that the airbag control module has detected a fault in the electrical circuit for the left-side deployment stage 1, which is typically the first-stage inflator of the driver's front airbag or a left-side airbag. The module monitors circuit resistance and continuity, and when the readings fall outside the expected range, it stores this code and usually illuminates the supplemental restraint system (SRS) warning light.

SYSTEM	CODE TYPE	SEVERITY	FIX DIFFICULTY	AREA
Body	Generic (all makes)	High	Professional	Airbags, seats, doors, lights and comfort systems

Symptoms you may notice

- The SRS or airbag warning light stays illuminated on the instrument cluster after the bulb-check sequence.
- The airbag system may be disabled, meaning the left-side airbag will not deploy in a collision.
- Often no symptoms besides the warning light, with no noticeable change in vehicle driveability.
- In some vehicles, a chime or message center alert reminds the driver that the restraint system needs service.
- Intermittent warning light operation if the fault is a loose connection or chafed wire that makes contact over bumps.
- Other restraint-related codes may be stored alongside B0021 if the fault affects shared wiring or connectors.

Common causes, most likely first

- 1 A loose, corroded, or unseated electrical connector at the left-side airbag module or under the seat.
- 2 Damaged or chafed wiring in the left-side airbag circuit, often from seat movement or steering column tilt.
- 3 A failed clock spring (spiral cable) in the steering wheel, which is a common wear item on high-mileage vehicles.
- 4 An open or shorted inflator squib inside the left-side airbag assembly itself.
- 5 Water intrusion or corrosion in a connector or wiring harness running to the left-side airbag.
- 6 A faulty airbag control module that is unable to read the circuit correctly, though this is less common.
- 7 Aftermarket accessories or previous repairs that disturbed the airbag wiring and left a poor connection.



How to diagnose and fix it

- 1 Inspect and reseal all connectors in the left-side airbag circuit, including the under-seat connector and the steering wheel connector if applicable.
- 2 Check for stored codes in all modules and record freeze-frame data to see the conditions when B0021 set.
- 3 Perform a resistance measurement on the left-side airbag squib circuit with a proper meter, comparing to the manufacturer's specification.
- 4 Inspect the wiring harness for chafing, pinches, or corrosion along the routing path, especially near seat tracks and the steering column.
- 5 If the clock spring is suspected, test its continuity through the full range of steering wheel rotation and replace it if faulty.
- 6 Substitute a known-good airbag or a simulator only according to service information to isolate the inflator from the wiring.
- 7 After repairs, clear the codes and verify the SRS light goes out and stays out through a complete drive cycle.

What most technicians miss on B0021

- A common misdiagnosis is replacing the airbag itself when the real fault is a corroded under-seat connector that simply needs cleaning and reseating.
- The clock spring is a frequent culprit on vehicles with tilt and telescoping steering columns, and it can cause B0021 even when the horn and cruise control still work.
- B0021 does not always mean the airbag is defective; it can be set by a momentary loss of continuity over a bump, so intermittent codes deserve a wiggle test of the harness.
- Aftermarket seat covers or heavy objects stored under the seats can pinch or strain the airbag wiring and trigger this code.
- Some vehicles require the battery to be disconnected and a specific wait time before servicing airbag circuits, and skipping this step can create new codes or personal injury risk.

Can I keep driving with B0021?

Because B0021 can disable the left-side airbag, the vehicle is not safe to drive until the fault is repaired; avoid any driving if the SRS light is on, and never attempt airbag repairs without disconnecting the battery and following the manufacturer's safety procedures.

Tools that help

- OBD-II scan tool with SRS capability
- Digital multimeter with low-ohm resolution
- Airbag simulator or load tool (per service information)
- Trim removal tools for accessing connectors
- Service information for wiring diagrams and resistance specifications



Reading B0021

- B** Body: airbags, seats, doors, lights and comfort systems.
- 0** Generic (SAE) code: it means the same thing on every OBD-II vehicle.
- 0** Airbags, seats, doors, lights and comfort systems.
- 21** The exact fault within that area.

Often seen with

B0012 Right Front/Passenger Frontal Stage 2 Deployment Control · **B0013** Passenger Knee Bolster Deployment Control · **B0020** Passenger Frontal Stage 1 Deployment Control Circuit · **B0022** Left Side Deployment Stage 1 Loop Open · **U0151** Lost Communication With Restraints Control Module

See it working

Watch the animated explainer [How Airbags Work: A 50 km/h Crash in Slow Motion](#) on Auto Veteran to see the parts involved moving.

Full guide, related articles and animations: <https://www.autoveteran.tech/dtc-codes/b0021/>

