

GENERIC · BODY

B0128

OBD-II DIAGNOSTIC TROUBLE CODE (DTC)

B0128

Passenger Occupant Detection System Malfunction

B0128 indicates that the Passenger Occupant Detection System (PODS) has reported a fault to the airbag control module, meaning the system cannot reliably determine whether a passenger is present or how much they weigh. The computer has detected an electrical or communication problem within the occupant classification circuit, which may prevent the passenger airbag from deploying or cause it to deploy with incorrect force.

SYSTEM

Body

CODE TYPE

Generic (all makes)

SEVERITY

Medium

FIX DIFFICULTY

Professional

AREA

Airbags, seats, doors, lights and comfort systems

Symptoms you may notice

- The airbag warning light on the dashboard stays illuminated.
- A message such as 'Passenger Airbag Off' may appear even when an adult is seated.
- The passenger airbag status indicator may show 'Off' regardless of seat occupancy.
- The seatbelt reminder chime may not activate for the passenger seat.
- Often no symptoms besides the warning light, with the system otherwise appearing normal.

Common causes, most likely first

- 1 Faulty passenger seat weight sensor or occupant classification sensor mat.
- 2 Damaged or pinched wiring under the passenger seat, often from seat movement.
- 3 Corroded or loose electrical connector at the occupant detection module or seat sensor.
- 4 Failed passenger occupant detection system control module.
- 5 Software calibration error or lost learned values in the occupant detection system.
- 6 Aftermarket seat covers or heavy objects left on the passenger seat interfering with sensor readings.



How to diagnose and fix it

- 1 Inspect the passenger seat area for aftermarket accessories or heavy items and remove them, then clear the code and retest.
- 2 Visually inspect the wiring harness and connectors under the passenger seat for damage, corrosion, or loose pins.
- 3 Use a scan tool to read live data from the occupant detection system and compare weight readings with known loads.
- 4 Perform a zero-point calibration or relearn procedure for the occupant detection system as specified by the manufacturer.
- 5 Check for technical service bulletins (TSBs) or software updates related to the occupant detection system for the vehicle make and model.
- 6 If sensor readings are inconsistent, replace the occupant classification sensor mat or weight sensor according to service information.
- 7 If all else fails, replace the passenger occupant detection system control module and perform initialization.

Common misdiagnosis traps for B0128

- A weak or failing battery can cause the occupant detection module to lose its calibration, setting B0128 without any physical fault in the seat.
- Aftermarket seat covers, cushions, or heavy objects left on the passenger seat are frequently overlooked causes of false occupant detection faults.
- The occupant detection system often requires a zero-point calibration after any seat removal or replacement, and skipping this step will immediately reset the code.
- B0128 can be set by a communication fault on the Controller Area Network (CAN) bus between the occupant detection module and the airbag control module, so check network integrity before replacing parts.
- On some vehicles, the passenger airbag indicator light bulb or LED failure can trigger a related code, so verify the indicator operation as part of diagnosis.

Can I keep driving with B0128?

You can generally drive the vehicle, but the passenger airbag may be disabled or may not deploy correctly in a crash, so avoid carrying passengers in the front seat until the fault is repaired. Have the system diagnosed promptly to restore full supplemental restraint function.

Tools that help

- OBD-II scan tool with airbag and occupant detection system capabilities
- Digital multimeter for checking wiring continuity and resistance
- Manufacturer-specific diagnostic software or scan tool for calibration and relearn procedures
- Socket set and trim tools for accessing seat connectors and modules
- Service information or wiring diagrams for the specific vehicle



Reading B0128

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

Often seen with

B0127 DC/AC Converter A High Voltage Power Outlet "A" Circuit/Open · **B0129** DC/AC Converter A High Voltage Power Outlet "C" Circuit/Open · **B0130** Driver Seatbelt Tension Sensor Circuit · **B0131** A/V Sensor Washer Fluid C Control Circuit · **B0132** A/V Sensor Washer Fluid D Control Circuit

See it working

Watch the animated explainer [Four-Stroke Engine Cutaway: Intake to Exhaust](#) on Auto Veteran to see the parts involved moving.

Full guide, related articles and animations: <https://www.autoveteran.tech/dtc-codes/b0128/>

