

GENERIC · BODY

B0860

OBD-II DIAGNOSTIC TROUBLE CODE (DTC)

B0860

License Plate Lamp Circuit

B0860 indicates that the body control module (BCM) has detected an open circuit, short to ground, or short to voltage in the license plate lamp circuit. The BCM monitors the circuit and sets this code when the expected voltage or current is outside the normal range, often when the lamp should be illuminated.

SYSTEM

Body

CODE TYPE

Generic (all makes)

SEVERITY

Low

FIX DIFFICULTY

Intermediate

AREA

Airbags, seats, doors, lights and comfort systems

Symptoms you may notice

- License plate lamp does not illuminate when the parking lights or headlights are turned on
- One or both license plate lamps may be dim or flickering
- Often no symptoms besides the warning light, as the lamp is not always noticed by the driver
- Other exterior lamps may also be inoperative if they share a common ground or power feed
- A bulb-out warning message may appear on the dashboard in vehicles with advanced lighting systems

Common causes, most likely first

- 1 Failed license plate lamp bulb (filament broken or LED module failed)
- 2 Corroded, damaged, or disconnected electrical connector at the lamp assembly
- 3 Broken or chafed wire in the license plate lamp circuit, often near the trunk hinge or bumper
- 4 Blown fuse that supplies the license plate lamp circuit (though this usually affects multiple lamps)
- 5 Faulty body control module (BCM) or lighting control module, though rare
- 6 Water intrusion into the lamp housing or connector causing a short



How to diagnose and fix it

- 1 Verify the license plate lamp operation by turning on the parking lights and inspecting the lamp; replace the bulb if it is burned out.
- 2 Inspect the lamp connector and socket for corrosion, water intrusion, or loose pins; clean or repair as needed.
- 3 Check the fuse that protects the license plate lamp circuit; replace if blown, but investigate why it blew.
- 4 Disconnect the battery and use a digital multimeter to check for continuity and voltage at the lamp connector with the lights on; compare to service information.
- 5 Trace the wiring harness from the lamp to the BCM, looking for chafed, pinched, or broken wires, especially around moving parts like the trunk lid.
- 6 If the circuit tests good but the code persists, check for technical service bulletins (TSBs) or known issues for the specific vehicle model.
- 7 As a last resort, diagnose the BCM by checking its outputs and grounds; replace only if confirmed faulty after all other possibilities are eliminated.

License plate lamp circuit quirks and traps

- A common oversight is replacing the bulb without checking the socket for corrosion; water often enters through a cracked lens and causes repeated bulb failures.
- The BCM may set B0860 even if the lamp works intermittently, so wiggle-test the harness while watching the lamp to catch an intermittent connection.
- On some vehicles, the license plate lamp shares a ground with the tail lamps; a bad ground can cause both to malfunction and set multiple codes.
- Aftermarket LED bulbs can draw less current than expected and trigger a bulb-out code even though the lamp lights up; use OEM-spec bulbs to avoid false codes.
- The code may be stored as history if the fault occurred only once; clear it and verify if it returns before replacing expensive modules.

Can I keep driving with B0860?

The vehicle remains safe to drive because the license plate lamp is not a safety-critical system, but driving without it may violate local lighting regulations. Avoid driving at night until the lamp is repaired to prevent being pulled over.

Tools that help

- Digital multimeter
- Test light
- Socket set and trim removal tools
- Vehicle service information (wiring diagrams)
- OBD-II scan tool



Reading B0860

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

See it working

Watch the animated explainer [Fuel Trims Explained: Short-Term and Long-Term](#) on Auto Veteran to see the parts involved moving.

Full guide, related articles and animations: <https://www.autoveteran.tech/dtc-codes/b0860/>

