

GENERIC · CHASSIS

C0401

OBD-II DIAGNOSTIC TROUBLE CODE (DTC)

C0401

Traction Control Switch Circuit

The C0401 code indicates that the traction control system (TCS) has detected a fault in the electrical circuit of the traction control switch, which is the button used to turn the system on or off. The computer monitors the switch circuit for expected voltage changes when the button is pressed and sets this code when the signal is outside the normal range or inconsistent.

SYSTEM	CODE TYPE	SEVERITY	FIX DIFFICULTY	AREA
Chassis	Generic (all makes)	Low	Intermediate	Brakes, steering and suspension

Symptoms you may notice

- The traction control warning light or stability control light stays illuminated on the dashboard.
- The traction control system may be disabled and not activate when wheel slip occurs.
- The traction control switch may not respond when pressed, or may require multiple presses to toggle the system.
- Often no symptoms besides the warning light, with the vehicle driving normally.
- In some vehicles, the stability control or anti-lock brake system (ABS) light may also illuminate as a related system.
- The switch illumination may not work or may stay on constantly.

Common causes, most likely first

- Faulty traction control switch (internal contact failure or worn button mechanism).
- Damaged or corroded wiring harness or connector at the switch.
- Open or short circuit in the switch ground or signal wire.
- Blown fuse or poor electrical connection in the circuit.
- Failed body control module (BCM) or traction control module not recognizing the switch input.
- Moisture or debris intrusion into the switch causing intermittent operation.



How to diagnose and fix it

- 1 Verify the code with a scan tool and check for any related codes in the ABS/traction control system.
- 2 Inspect the traction control switch for physical damage, sticking, or contamination and clean if necessary.
- 3 Check the fuse and relay associated with the traction control switch circuit.
- 4 Disconnect the switch and inspect the connector and wiring for corrosion, loose pins, or damage.
- 5 Test the switch operation using a multimeter to check for continuity or voltage changes when pressed.
- 6 Check the ground circuit for the switch and repair any open or high resistance.
- 7 If the switch and wiring are good, diagnose the control module input and replace the module if faulty.

Common misdiagnosis of traction control switch codes

- A faulty brake pedal position sensor or cruise control switch can sometimes cause similar symptoms and set related codes, so always check for other stored codes before replacing the traction control switch.
- The traction control switch circuit often shares a ground with other dashboard switches; a bad ground can cause multiple switch failures and mislead diagnosis.
- In some vehicles, the traction control switch is integrated into the center console and may require removal of trim panels, making diagnosis more labor-intensive than expected.
- After replacing the switch, the new component may require calibration or programming with a scan tool to be recognized by the control module.
- Intermittent switch failures may not set the code immediately; a wiggle test of the wiring while monitoring live data can reveal a bad connection.

Can I keep driving with C0401?

The vehicle is safe to drive with this code because the traction control system may be disabled, but you should avoid driving in conditions where traction control is critical, such as slippery roads or inclement weather. Have the system repaired promptly to restore full safety features.

Tools that help

- OBD-II scan tool with ABS/traction control capability
- Digital multimeter
- Trim removal tool
- Wiring diagram for the specific vehicle
- Test light



Reading C0401

- C** Chassis: brakes, steering and suspension.
- 0** Generic (SAE) code: it means the same thing on every OBD-II vehicle.
- 4** Brakes, steering and suspension.
- 01** The exact fault within that area.

Often seen with

C0050 Right Rear Wheel Speed Sensor Circuit Malfunction · **C0402** Traction Control Lamp Circuit · **U0122** Lost Communication With Vehicle Dynamics Control Module

See it working

Watch the animated explainer [Master the Four-Stroke Engine Cycle](#) on Auto Veteran to see the parts involved moving.

Full guide, related articles and animations: <https://www.autoveteran.tech/dtc-codes/c0401/>

