

GENERIC · CHASSIS

C055E

OBD-II DIAGNOSTIC TROUBLE CODE (DTC)

C055E

Brake Hydraulic Circuit A Leak

C055E indicates that the anti-lock brake system (ABS) module has detected a hydraulic fluid leak in brake circuit A, which is typically the primary diagonal circuit feeding one front and the opposite rear wheel. The module monitors pressure decay and pump activity, and when it sees pressure dropping faster than expected during a static or active test, it stores this code and illuminates the ABS and brake warning lights.

SYSTEM

Chassis

CODE TYPE

Generic (all makes)

SEVERITY

High

FIX DIFFICULTY

Professional

AREA

Brakes, steering and suspension

Symptoms you may notice

- ABS warning light and red brake warning light illuminated on the dashboard
- Often no symptoms besides the warning light, especially if the leak is small and the reservoir level has not dropped noticeably
- A soft or spongy brake pedal that may slowly sink when held under steady pressure
- Visible fluid seepage or wet spots around a wheel, brake line, or under the master cylinder area
- Longer stopping distances or ABS cycling unexpectedly during normal braking
- Low brake fluid level in the reservoir requiring repeated topping up

Common causes, most likely first

- 1 A rusted or corroded steel brake line along the chassis or near a wheel arch
- 2 A failed wheel cylinder or caliper piston seal allowing fluid to escape
- 3 A leaking ABS hydraulic modulator valve body or its internal seals
- 4 A cracked or loose brake hose fitting at a caliper or strut mount
- 5 A damaged or improperly seated master cylinder reservoir seal
- 6 A pinhole leak in a hard line caused by road debris or vibration fatigue
- 7 Air ingress through a failing seal that mimics a leak by causing pressure loss



How to diagnose and fix it

- 1 Check the brake fluid reservoir level and inspect all visible lines, hoses, calipers, and wheel cylinders for wetness or corrosion
- 2 Pressure-test the hydraulic circuit A with a brake pressure gauge or use the scan tool to run an ABS pump activation test while watching for pressure decay
- 3 Inspect the ABS modulator for external seepage and check its electrical connectors for fluid contamination
- 4 Repair or replace the leaking component, whether it is a line, hose, caliper, wheel cylinder, or modulator seal
- 5 Bleed the entire brake system in the correct sequence to remove air, then verify pedal firmness and fluid level stability
- 6 Clear the code with a scan tool and perform a road test that includes ABS activation to confirm the leak is resolved and the code does not return
- 7 Recheck for residual pressure loss after the repair and verify that the ABS warning lamp stays off during a complete drive cycle

What a brake fluid leak really means

- A small leak can trigger C055E without any visible puddle because the fluid may be trapped inside a dust boot on a caliper or wheel cylinder, so always pull the boots back during inspection
- The code does not always mean a catastrophic line failure; a slightly loose flare nut or a degraded hose can cause enough pressure decay for the ABS module to flag circuit A
- Replacing the ABS modulator is rarely the first fix, yet many technicians jump to it before pressure-testing the simple hydraulic components and checking for air in the system
- A failing master cylinder can cause internal bypass that looks like an external leak on a scan tool, so verify that the reservoir level actually drops before condemning a line or caliper
- After any repair, the ABS module may need a bleed procedure or a relearn through a scan tool, and skipping that step can leave the code stored even though the leak is fixed

Can I keep driving with C055E?

Do not continue driving normally with a confirmed brake fluid leak, because loss of pressure in circuit A can reduce braking effectiveness and disable the anti-lock function. If the pedal feels firm and the reservoir level is stable, you may drive cautiously to a nearby repair shop, but avoid heavy braking and highway speeds.

Tools that help

- OBD-II scan tool with ABS and brake system capabilities
- Brake pressure gauge set
- Brake line wrench set
- Fluid catch pan and clean rags
- Flashlight or inspection mirror
- Brake bleeder kit



Reading C055E

- C** Chassis: brakes, steering and suspension.
- 0** Generic (SAE) code: it means the same thing on every OBD-II vehicle.
- 5** Brakes, steering and suspension.
- 5E** The exact fault within that area.

Often seen with

C0040 Left Rear Wheel Speed Sensor Circuit · **C055D** Brake Hydraulic Circuit B Leak · **C055F** BSCM/EBBC Hydraulic Unit Performance · **C0560** Calibration Required · **C0561** ABS Disabled Warning Indicator Request

See it working

Watch the animated explainer [How ABS Works: Anti-Lock Brakes in X-Ray](#) on Auto Veteran to see the parts involved moving.

Full guide, related articles and animations: <https://www.autoveteran.tech/dtc-codes/c055e/>

