



C05B1

Brake Hydraulic Circuit D Leak

C05B1 indicates that the anti-lock brake system (ABS) control module has detected a hydraulic fluid leak in the brake circuit designated 'D', which is one of the isolated pressure circuits feeding a wheel brake. The module monitors pressure retention and decay during self-tests and compares the observed pressure drop against an expected threshold, setting this code when the loss exceeds the calibrated limit.

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

Symptoms you may notice

- Illumination of the ABS warning light, and often the red brake warning light as well
- A soft or spongy brake pedal that may sink slowly when held under steady pressure
- Longer stopping distances or a noticeable pull to one side during hard braking
- Visible fluid weeping or wetness around a caliper, wheel cylinder, or brake line
- Low brake fluid level in the master cylinder reservoir with no obvious external puddle
- Often no symptoms besides the warning light, especially with a small internal leak

Common causes, most likely first

- 1 A leaking wheel cylinder or caliper seal on the affected circuit
- 2 A rusted or cracked rigid brake line, or a damaged flexible hose
- 3 A failed seal inside the ABS hydraulic modulator or pump assembly
- 4 Loose, cross-threaded, or damaged flare fittings and bleed screws
- 5 A leaking master cylinder secondary seal that feeds circuit D
- 6 Corrosion pitting inside a caliper piston bore that allows fluid past the seal

How to diagnose and fix it

- 1 Check the brake fluid level and inspect the entire circuit D for external leaks at lines, hoses, calipers, and fittings
- 2 Pressure-test the hydraulic system and watch for a slow pressure drop that indicates an internal leak
- 3 Inspect the ABS modulator and pump area for fluid residue or seepage around the valve block
- 4 Repair or replace the leaking component, then bleed the affected circuit thoroughly to remove air
- 5 Clear the code and perform the ABS self-test or a road test to confirm the leak is gone and the code does not return
- 6 If no external leak is found, test the master cylinder and modulator for internal bypass before condemning either part



What a Small Internal Leak Hides

- A circuit D leak can be entirely internal to the ABS modulator, so no fluid drips on the ground and the reservoir level may drop only very slowly over weeks.
- Technicians often replace a caliper or wheel cylinder when the real leak is a corroded steel line hidden above the fuel tank or under a plastic sill cover.
- A spongy pedal with no visible leak frequently points to a master cylinder secondary seal failing into the circuit rather than an external hose failure.
- After any hydraulic repair, trapped air in the ABS valve block can mimic a persistent leak until a proper scan-tool bleed routine is run.
- This code does not always mean the brakes will fail immediately, but a slow leak can worsen suddenly under heat and heavy use, so it should not be ignored.

Can I keep driving with C05B1?

Do not continue driving normally with a confirmed hydraulic leak, because brake performance can deteriorate suddenly and without warning. If the pedal feels soft or the fluid level is dropping, stop driving and have the vehicle towed or repaired before further use.

Tools that help

- OBD-II scan tool with ABS and brake system capability
- Brake pressure gauge and bleeder kit
- Fluid catch pan and clean rags
- Flare nut wrenches and line inspection mirror
- Flashlight for tracing lines and fittings

Reading C05B1

- 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.
- B1** The exact fault within that area.

Often seen with

C0040 Left Rear Wheel Speed Sensor Circuit · **C0110** ABS Pump Motor Circuit Malfunction · **C0121** Valve Relay Circuit Malfunction · **C05B0** Brake Hydraulic Circuit C Leak · **C05B2** Steering Wheel Angle Sensor Signal - Yaw Rate Sensor Signal



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/c05b1/>

