

GENERIC · CHASSIS

C0601

OBD-II DIAGNOSTIC TROUBLE CODE (DTC)

C0601

Active Air Dam Control Circuit/Open

C0601 indicates that the active air dam control module has detected an open circuit in the wiring that powers or commands the movable front air dam actuator. The computer expects a complete electrical path through the actuator motor or its position sensor, and it sees no continuity or an unexpected voltage drop when it commands the dam to move.

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

Symptoms you may notice

- The air dam warning light or a generic check engine light may illuminate on the dashboard.
- The active air dam may remain stuck in the deployed (down) position, reducing ground clearance.
- The active air dam may fail to deploy at highway speeds, which can slightly reduce fuel economy.
- A message such as 'Air Dam System Fault' may appear in the driver information center on some vehicles.
- Often no symptoms besides the warning light, because the dam may default to a fixed position that does not affect drivability.

Common causes, most likely first

- Broken or chafed wires in the harness that runs from the body to the movable air dam, often near a hinge or flex point.
- Corroded or loose electrical connector at the air dam actuator or control module.
- Failed air dam actuator motor with an open winding or internal brush failure.
- Blown fuse or open relay in the air dam power circuit.
- Damaged control module that cannot supply or sense the actuator circuit.
- Physical damage to the air dam assembly from road debris or a curb strike that has pulled on the wiring.



How to diagnose and fix it

- 1 Inspect the air dam assembly and its wiring harness for visible damage, chafing, or disconnected connectors, and repair any obvious faults.
- 2 Check the fuse and relay that supply power to the active air dam circuit, replacing them if open.
- 3 Disconnect the actuator connector and measure resistance across the actuator motor terminals to check for an open winding.
- 4 Back-probe the control module connector and check for battery voltage and ground on the actuator supply and return circuits while commanding the dam to move with a scan tool.
- 5 Perform a wiggle test on the harness while watching live data or resistance readings to reveal an intermittent open circuit.
- 6 If the actuator tests good but the module does not command it, check for communication codes and module power and ground feeds before condemning the module.
- 7 After repairs, clear the code and command the air dam through a full deploy and retract cycle to confirm the fix.

Hidden causes of an air dam open circuit

- The open circuit is frequently in the flexible section of harness that bends every time the dam moves, not at the actuator itself, so a visual inspection of the whole run is essential.
- A stuck or binding air dam mechanism can cause the module to set an open circuit code if the actuator stalls and the module interprets the lack of movement as an electrical fault.
- Some vehicles set C0601 when the air dam is physically removed or replaced with an aftermarket fixed panel, because the module sees no actuator load on the circuit.
- Water intrusion into the actuator connector can corrode the terminals and create a high-resistance open that only appears in wet weather.
- The code can be stored by a low battery or charging system fault that drops module voltage during the self-test, so check battery health before replacing parts.

Can I keep driving with C0601?

The vehicle remains safe to drive because the active air dam is an efficiency aid and does not affect braking, steering, or engine operation. Avoid high-speed driving if the dam is stuck in the down position and could contact parking blocks or steep driveways, and repair the fault when convenient to restore intended fuel economy.



Tools that help

- OBD-II scan tool with bidirectional control capability
- Digital multimeter
- Wire piercing probes or back-probe kit
- Trim removal tools
- Service information for the specific vehicle's air dam circuit

Reading C0601

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

Often seen with

C0602 Active Air Dam Control Circuit Low · **C0603** Active Air Dam Control Circuit High · **C0604** Active Air Dam Control Circuit Performance · **U0100** Lost Communication With ECM/PCM A

See it working

Watch the animated explainer [Inline-Four Engine X-Ray: Firing Order 1-3-4-2](#) on Auto Veteran to see the parts involved moving.

Full guide, related articles and animations: <https://www.autoveteran.tech/dtc-codes/c0601/>

