

CHRYSLER · POWERTRAIN

P1596

OBD-II DIAGNOSTIC TROUBLE CODE (DTC)

P1596 · Chrysler

Speed Control Switch Always High

P1596 on Chrysler vehicles means the powertrain control module (PCM) sees the speed control switch circuit stuck at a high voltage, which it interprets as a switch that is permanently open or not being pressed. The PCM monitors the voltage on the speed control switch signal circuit and expects it to change when you press the steering-wheel buttons; a constant high reading tells the module that no button input is being received or that the circuit is shorted to voltage.

SYSTEM

Powertrain

CODE TYPE

Chrysler specific

SEVERITY

Low

FIX DIFFICULTY

Intermediate

AREA

Vehicle speed, idle control and auxiliary inputs

Symptoms you may notice

- The cruise control system does not engage or cancels immediately after you set a speed
- The cruise control indicator light on the instrument cluster may flash or stay off when you try to activate it
- Often no symptoms besides the warning light, especially if the driver rarely uses cruise control
- Steering-wheel-mounted speed control buttons feel unresponsive or require excessive force
- In some cases the horn or other steering-wheel-mounted functions may also act erratically if the clock spring is involved
- The engine may run normally with no drivability complaints, since this code affects only the speed control subsystem

Common causes, most likely first

- 1 A faulty speed control switch assembly on the steering wheel, where the internal contacts wear out or stick open
- 2 A damaged or dirty clock spring (the rotating electrical connector in the steering column) that interrupts the switch signal
- 3 An open or shorted wire in the speed control switch circuit between the steering wheel and the PCM
- 4 Corroded or loose electrical connectors at the clock spring, the steering column harness, or the PCM
- 5 A failed PCM that incorrectly reads the switch voltage, though this is the least likely cause
- 6 Aftermarket steering-wheel covers or accessories that physically interfere with the switch buttons
- 7 Water intrusion or debris in the steering-wheel switch housing causing a permanent open circuit



How to diagnose and fix it

- 1 Use a scan tool to read the speed control switch status and confirm the PCM sees a constant high voltage with no button presses
- 2 Inspect the steering-wheel switch assembly for physical damage, sticky buttons, or aftermarket covers that block movement
- 3 Check the clock spring for continuity and signs of wear, especially if the horn or other steering-wheel functions are also affected
- 4 Disconnect the battery and measure resistance across the speed control switch terminals while pressing each button to verify the switch changes state
- 5 Trace the speed control switch signal wire from the steering wheel through the clock spring to the PCM, looking for opens, shorts to voltage, or chafed insulation
- 6 Clean and reseal all connectors in the circuit, then clear the code and test the cruise control operation on a safe road
- 7 If the circuit and switch test good but the code returns, substitute a known-good PCM or perform a relearn procedure as required for your Chrysler model

Why the switch reads high when nothing is pressed

- The PCM expects a specific voltage divider signal from the speed control switches, and a stuck-high reading often means the switch contacts are open rather than shorted, so replacing the PCM first is a costly misdiagnosis.
- A failing clock spring frequently sets P1596 without any airbag warning light, because the speed control circuit can fail independently of the airbag squib circuits inside the same component.
- Drivers who never use cruise control may still get this code because the PCM continuously monitors the switch circuit whenever the ignition is on, so the fault can appear even if the buttons were never touched.
- Aftermarket steering-wheel covers or phone mounts clamped to the wheel can press on the switch buttons and hold the circuit in a state the PCM interprets as a permanent high signal.
- On some Chrysler models the speed control switch shares a ground path with the horn relay, so a poor ground can set P1596 along with intermittent horn operation that owners overlook.

Can I keep driving with P1596?

This code does not affect engine operation, braking, or steering, so you can drive the vehicle normally, but the cruise control will not work until the fault is repaired. Avoid relying on cruise control on long trips, and have the circuit inspected at your convenience to prevent a more expensive clock spring or wiring repair later.



Tools that help

- OBD-II scan tool with live data capability
- Digital multimeter
- Trim removal tools for steering column covers
- Wiring diagram for the specific Chrysler model
- Torx or Phillips screwdrivers for steering-wheel switch removal

Reading P1596

- P** Powertrain: engine, transmission and emissions.
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- 1** Manufacturer-specific code (Chrysler): its meaning depends on the make.
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- 5** Vehicle speed, idle control and auxiliary inputs.
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- 96** The exact fault within that area.

Often seen with

P1595 Automatic Transmission Diagnosis Input Signal Circuit Low In · **P1595** Speed Control Solenoid Circuit Open Or Shorted · **P1597** Speed Control Switch Always Low · **P1595** Speed Control Solenoid Circuit Open Or Shorted · **P1597** Speed Control Switch Always Low · **P0562** System Voltage Low · **P0563** System Voltage High · **P0571** Brake Switch 'A' Circuit

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/chrysler-p1596/>

