

FORD · POWERTRAIN

P1261

OBD-II DIAGNOSTIC TROUBLE CODE (DTC)

P1261 · Ford

Cylinder 1 High To Low Side Short

P1261 on Ford vehicles means the powertrain control module (PCM) has detected a short between the high and low sides of the fuel injector circuit for cylinder 1. The PCM monitors the injector driver circuit and flags this code when the voltage on the high side is pulled down toward the low side, indicating a short circuit that can prevent proper injector operation.

SYSTEM	CODE TYPE	SEVERITY	FIX DIFFICULTY	AREA
Powertrain	Ford specific	Medium	Intermediate	Fuel and air metering (injector circuits)

Symptoms you may notice

- Illuminated check engine light, often with no other noticeable symptoms
- Rough idle or misfire felt as shaking or stumbling, especially when cold
- Reduced engine power or hesitation during acceleration
- Poor fuel economy due to incomplete combustion in cylinder 1
- Possible engine vibration or misfire code stored alongside P1261
- In severe cases, the engine may enter limp mode or stall

Common causes, most likely first

- 1 Chafed or damaged injector wiring harness between the PCM and cylinder 1 injector, causing the high and low sides to touch
- 2 Internal short inside the cylinder 1 fuel injector solenoid
- 3 Corroded or loose connector pins at the cylinder 1 injector or PCM connector
- 4 Failed PCM injector driver circuit (less common but possible)
- 5 Aftermarket alarm or remote start wiring tapped into the injector circuit incorrectly
- 6 Rodent damage to the injector wiring loom



How to diagnose and fix it

- 1 Inspect the cylinder 1 injector connector and wiring for visible damage, corrosion, or loose pins
- 2 Disconnect the PCM and injector connectors and measure resistance between the high and low injector circuit terminals to check for a short
- 3 Isolate the harness by wiggling and flexing the loom while monitoring resistance to find intermittent shorts
- 4 Swap the cylinder 1 injector with a known-good injector from another cylinder to see if the code moves
- 5 Check for aftermarket wiring or accessories tapped into the injector circuit and remove or repair as needed
- 6 If the harness and injector test good, test the PCM driver circuit with a noid light or oscilloscope
- 7 Replace the faulty injector, repair the harness section, or replace the PCM as indicated by test results

Before you replace the PCM or injector

- A common misdiagnosis is replacing the PCM when the real fault is a chafed wire in the injector harness near the valve cover or intake manifold.
- The code can set intermittently due to vibration, so a wiggle test of the harness while monitoring live data is often more revealing than a static resistance check.
- Aftermarket remote starters or alarm systems that tap into injector wiring are a frequent hidden cause on older Ford vehicles.
- A shorted injector can sometimes still allow the engine to run, so the presence of a misfire is not guaranteed; always verify the circuit before condemning parts.
- The PCM may store P1261 alongside misfire codes for cylinder 1, but the misfire is a symptom of the short, not a separate ignition fault.

Can I keep driving with P1261?

You can usually drive the vehicle short distances to a repair shop, but avoid heavy acceleration or towing because a misfiring cylinder can overheat the catalytic converter. If the engine runs very rough or stalls, stop driving and have it towed.

Tools that help

- Digital multimeter
- OBD-II scan tool with live data
- Noid light or oscilloscope
- Wire repair kit with crimpers and heat shrink
- Electrical contact cleaner
- Factory service information for wiring diagrams



Reading P1261

- P** Powertrain: engine, transmission and emissions.
- 1** Manufacturer-specific code (Ford): its meaning depends on the make.
- 2** Fuel and air metering (injector circuits).
- 61** The exact fault within that area.

Often seen with

P1262 Cylinder 2 High To Low Side Short · **P1263** Cylinder 3 High To Low Side Short · **P0201** Injector Circuit Malfunction - Cylinder 1 · **P0301** Cylinder 1 Misfire Detected · **P0351** Ignition Coil A Primary/Secondary Circuit Malfunction

See it working

Watch the animated explainer [How a MAP Sensor Works: Engine Vacuum and Load](#) on Auto Veteran to see the parts involved moving.

Full guide, related articles and animations: <https://www.autoveteran.tech/dtc-codes/ford-p1261/>

