

FORD · POWERTRAIN

P1867

OBD-II DIAGNOSTIC TROUBLE CODE (DTC)

P1867 · Ford

Transmission Transfer Case Contact Plate General Circuit Failure

P1867 on Ford vehicles indicates that the transfer case control module has detected a general circuit failure in the contact plate assembly, which is the sensor plate inside the transfer case shift motor that reports the current gear position. The module monitors voltage and resistance on the contact plate circuits and sets this code when the signal is out of range, open, or shorted, preventing reliable engagement of four-wheel drive or low range.

SYSTEM	CODE TYPE	SEVERITY	FIX DIFFICULTY	AREA
Powertrain	Ford specific	Medium	Intermediate	Transmission

Symptoms you may notice

- Four-wheel drive or low-range modes will not engage when selected, and the dash indicator may flash or stay off.
- The transfer case may default to two-wheel drive or neutral, leaving the vehicle without four-wheel-drive capability.
- A grinding or clunking noise may be heard from the transfer case when shifting is attempted.
- The four-wheel-drive warning light or service four-wheel-drive message illuminates on the instrument cluster.
- Often no symptoms besides the warning light, with normal driving in two-wheel drive unaffected.

Common causes, most likely first

- Corroded or damaged electrical connector at the transfer case shift motor, allowing moisture and road salt to degrade the contact plate signals.
- Worn or contaminated contact plate inside the shift motor, where the electrical traces and wiper contacts lose continuity.
- Open or shorted wiring in the harness between the transfer case control module and the shift motor, often from chafing or pinched insulation.
- Failed transfer case shift motor assembly, where the motor brushes or internal position sensor fail together with the contact plate.
- Water intrusion into the shift motor housing, causing corrosion on the contact plate and circuit board.
- Faulty transfer case control module, though this is less common and should be confirmed after circuit testing.



How to diagnose and fix it

- 1 Inspect the electrical connector at the transfer case shift motor for corrosion, loose pins, or water intrusion, and clean or repair as needed.
- 2 Check the wiring harness between the control module and shift motor for continuity, shorts to ground, and shorts to power using a digital multimeter.
- 3 Remove the shift motor and inspect the contact plate for wear, contamination, or corrosion; clean the contacts if minor, but replace the motor assembly if the plate is damaged.
- 4 Test the shift motor by applying power and ground directly to confirm it moves through its range and that the contact plate signals change smoothly.
- 5 If the motor and wiring check out, verify power and ground at the control module and inspect for stored codes in other modules that might affect transfer case operation.
- 6 Replace the transfer case shift motor assembly if the contact plate is faulty, then clear the code and perform a transfer case shift relearn or calibration procedure as required.
- 7 After repair, test engagement of all transfer case modes and confirm the code does not return during a road test.

What Ford transfer case owners often overlook

- A corroded connector at the shift motor is frequently the real culprit, so always inspect and clean the pins before condemning the motor itself.
- The contact plate is not sold separately on many Ford transfer cases, meaning a faulty plate requires replacing the entire shift motor assembly.
- This code can be set by a weak battery or low voltage during cranking, so check battery health and charging system operation before deeper diagnostics.
- After replacing the shift motor, some Ford models require a scan tool to perform a transfer case shift motor calibration, or the code may reset immediately.
- Wiring harness damage near the exhaust or frame rail is a common hidden cause, so trace the harness carefully rather than assuming the motor has failed.

Can I keep driving with P1867?

You can usually continue driving in two-wheel drive if the vehicle moves normally, but avoid relying on four-wheel drive and do not attempt to engage low range until the fault is repaired. If the transfer case is stuck in neutral or makes grinding noises, stop driving and have the vehicle towed to prevent internal damage.



Tools that help

- OBD-II scan tool with Ford-specific software
- Digital multimeter
- Socket and ratchet set
- Torque wrench
- Wire terminal cleaning brush or contact cleaner
- Jack and jack stands or ramps

Reading P1867

P Powertrain: engine, transmission and emissions.

1 Manufacturer-specific code (Ford): its meaning depends on the make.

8 Transmission.

67 The exact fault within that area.

Often seen with

P1865 Data Bus Powertrain Missing Message From Central Electronics · **P1866** Data Bus Powertrain Missing Messages · **P1868** Transmission Fluid Life · **P1870** Transmission Component Slipping · **P1866** Transmission Transfer Case System Concern Servicing Required · **P1876** Transmission Transfer Case 2-Wheel Drive Solenoid Circuit Fa

See it working

Watch the animated explainer [How an Automatic Transmission Works, Gear by Gear](#) on Auto Veteran to see the parts involved moving.

Full guide, related articles and animations: <https://www.autoveteran.tech/dtc-codes/ford-p1867/>

