

GM · POWERTRAIN

P1196

OBD-II DIAGNOSTIC TROUBLE CODE (DTC)

P1196 · GM

O2 Sensor 2/1 (Bank 2 Sensor 1) Slow During Catalyst Monitor

P1196 on GM vehicles means the powertrain control module (PCM) has detected that the downstream oxygen sensor on bank 2 (sensor 2/1) is responding too slowly during the catalyst monitor test. The PCM commands a rich-to-lean fuel transition and measures how quickly the sensor voltage changes; when the response time exceeds the calibrated threshold, this code is stored.

SYSTEM

Powertrain

CODE TYPE

GM specific

SEVERITY

Medium

FIX DIFFICULTY

Intermediate

AREA

Fuel and air metering

Symptoms you may notice

- Illumination of the check engine light, often with no other noticeable symptoms
- Slightly reduced fuel economy if the slow sensor causes the PCM to run a less efficient fuel mixture
- Intermittent hesitation or a subtle stumble during light acceleration in some cases
- A pending P1196 code that may not turn on the light until the second consecutive drive cycle
- No drivability complaints at all in many instances, especially when the sensor is only marginally slow

Common causes, most likely first

- 1 Aged or contaminated downstream oxygen sensor on bank 2 that has lost its switching speed
- 2 Exhaust leaks upstream of the sensor, allowing outside air to dilute the sample and slow the response
- 3 Wiring damage or corrosion in the sensor circuit, including the connector and pigtail, increasing resistance
- 4 A failing catalytic converter on bank 2 that is not storing and releasing oxygen properly, which can make a good sensor appear slow
- 5 An exhaust leak between the converter and the sensor that lets fresh air pulse past the sensor tip
- 6 Oil or coolant contamination from an internal engine leak that coats the sensor element and slows its reaction
- 7 A PCM calibration issue or a rare internal driver fault in the PCM that affects the sensor heater circuit



How to diagnose and fix it

- 1 Inspect the bank 2 downstream oxygen sensor wiring and connector for chafing, corrosion, or loose pins, and repair as needed
- 2 Check for exhaust leaks at the manifold, downpipe, and converter flanges using a smoke machine or by listening for ticking when cold
- 3 Use a scan tool to view live bank 2 downstream oxygen sensor voltage and compare its switching speed to the bank 1 downstream sensor
- 4 Perform a propane enrichment test at the intake to confirm the sensor reacts promptly to a rich command
- 5 Verify the sensor heater circuit resistance and supply voltage with a multimeter, and replace the sensor if the heater or element is out of specification
- 6 If the sensor responds normally but the code persists, evaluate catalytic converter efficiency on bank 2 with a backpressure test and oxygen storage test
- 7 Clear the code and perform a catalyst monitor drive cycle to confirm the repair, then recheck for pending codes

Slow O2 sensor or lazy catalyst on bank 2

- A downstream oxygen sensor that is only slightly slow can pass a simple voltage swing test but still fail the PCM's timed catalyst monitor, so live data comparison between banks is more reliable than a pass/fail check.
- Exhaust leaks upstream of the downstream sensor are a common cause of a false slow-sensor code because outside air makes the sensor see lean conditions longer than the PCM expects.
- Replacing the downstream sensor without checking the catalytic converter often leads to a repeat code when the converter is the true cause of the slow response.
- The bank 2 downstream sensor on V6 and V8 GM engines is often harder to reach, and a damaged pigtail during replacement can create a new slow-response fault.
- A contaminated sensor from coolant or oil burning may read normally at idle but respond slowly under the higher exhaust flow of the catalyst monitor, so the fault can be intermittent.

Can I keep driving with P1196?

You can usually keep driving with P1196 because the fault mainly affects emissions monitoring and does not create an immediate safety risk. Avoid long-term driving with the light on, and do not ignore repeated codes, because a worsening sensor or converter can eventually affect fuel economy and emissions compliance.

Tools that help

- Scan tool with live data and catalyst monitor capability
- Digital multimeter
- Smoke machine for exhaust leak detection
- Oxygen sensor socket
- Propane enrichment tool



Reading P1196

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

Often seen with

P1195 EGR Boost Sensor Circuit · **P1195** EGR Boost Or Pressure Sensor Circuit Fault · **P1195** O2 Sensor Heater Circuit Low Resistance Fault 1 · **P1195** O2 Sensor 1/1 (Bank 1 Sensor 1) Slow During Catalyst Monitor · **P1195** SCP HBCC Failed To Initialize · **P1195** O2 Sensor 1/1 (Bank 1 Sensor 1) Slow During Catalyst Monitor · **P0136** O2 Sensor Circuit Malfunction (Bank 1 Sensor 2) · **P0137** O2 Sensor Circuit Low Voltage (Bank 1 Sensor 2) · **P0138** O2 Sensor Circuit High Voltage (Bank 1 Sensor 2) · **P0420** Catalyst System Efficiency Below Threshold (Bank 1)

See it working

Watch the animated explainer [How Drive-by-Wire Works: Electronic Throttle Body](#) on Auto Veteran to see the parts involved moving.

Full guide, related articles and animations: <https://www.autoveteran.tech/dtc-codes/gm-p1196/>

