

GENERIC · POWERTRAIN

P0104

OBD-II DIAGNOSTIC TROUBLE CODE (DTC)

P0104

Mass/Volume Air Flow Circuit Intermittent

P0104 indicates that the engine control module (ECM) has detected an intermittent fault in the mass air flow (MAF) or volume air flow sensor circuit. The ECM sees the sensor signal dropping out or jumping erratically rather than providing a steady, plausible reading, which can upset fuel delivery and engine operation.

SYSTEM

Powertrain

CODE TYPE

Generic (all makes)

SEVERITY

Medium

FIX DIFFICULTY

Intermediate

AREA

Fuel and air metering

Symptoms you may notice

- Check engine light illuminated, often with no other noticeable symptoms
- Intermittent engine stumble or hesitation during acceleration
- Rough idle or stalling that comes and goes
- Poor fuel economy or black smoke from the tailpipe
- Delayed or harsh transmission shifts due to incorrect load signal

Common causes, most likely first

- 1 Contaminated or failing mass air flow sensor element
- 2 Damaged or loose wiring between the MAF sensor and the ECM
- 3 Corroded or backed-out terminals at the MAF sensor connector
- 4 Intake air leaks after the MAF sensor causing erratic readings
- 5 Failed MAF sensor internal electronics
- 6 Poor electrical ground for the MAF sensor circuit

How to diagnose and fix it

- 1 Inspect the MAF sensor connector and wiring for looseness, corrosion, or chafing
- 2 Check for intake air leaks between the MAF sensor and throttle body
- 3 Clean the MAF sensor element with a dedicated MAF cleaner
- 4 Backprobe the MAF signal wire and wiggle-test the harness while watching live data
- 5 Compare MAF sensor readings to expected values under different engine speeds
- 6 Replace the MAF sensor if cleaning and wiring checks do not resolve the intermittent signal



Intermittent MAF faults that fool technicians

- A dirty MAF sensor often causes intermittent dropouts before it fails completely, so cleaning can restore a steady signal without replacement.
- Wiring harness chafing near the air box or engine mount is a common hidden cause that only shows up when the engine moves under load.
- Some vehicles set P0104 when the MAF sensor signal is momentarily lost during cranking, which can be a normal artifact if the code does not return.
- An intake air leak after the MAF sensor can create erratic readings that mimic a failing sensor, so always pressure-test the intake tract first.

Can I keep driving with P0104?

You can usually drive with P0104, but avoid heavy acceleration and towing until the fault is repaired because intermittent MAF signals can cause stalling or poor fuel control. If the engine stumbles or stalls frequently, park the vehicle and diagnose it promptly.

Tools that help

- OBD-II scan tool with live data
- Digital multimeter
- MAF sensor cleaner
- Basic hand tools
- Smoke machine or intake leak tester

Reading P0104

P	Powertrain: engine, transmission and emissions.
0	Generic (SAE) code: it means the same thing on every OBD-II vehicle.
1	Fuel and air metering.
04	The exact fault within that area.

Often seen with

P0100 Mass/Volume Air Flow Circuit Malfunction · **P0101** Mass/Volume Air Flow Circuit Range/Performance · **P0102** Mass/Volume Air Flow Circuit Low Input · **P0103** Mass/Volume Air Flow Circuit High Input · **P0171** System Too Lean (Bank 1)



See it working

Watch the animated explainer [Fuel Trims Explained: Short-Term and Long-Term](#) on Auto Veteran to see the parts involved moving.

Full guide, related articles and animations: <https://www.autoveteran.tech/dtc-codes/p0104/>

