

GENERIC · POWERTRAIN

P0275

OBD-II DIAGNOSTIC TROUBLE CODE (DTC)

P0275

Cylinder 5 Contribution/Balance

P0275 is a generic powertrain code that indicates the engine control module has detected an abnormal contribution from cylinder 5 to overall engine power, typically by monitoring crankshaft speed fluctuations. The computer compares the acceleration of the crankshaft during each cylinder's power stroke and flags cylinder 5 when its contribution deviates beyond a calibrated threshold.

SYSTEM	CODE TYPE	SEVERITY	FIX DIFFICULTY	AREA
Powertrain	Generic (all makes)	Medium	Intermediate	Fuel and air metering (injector circuits)

Symptoms you may notice

- Illumination of the check engine light, often with no other noticeable symptoms
- A noticeable engine misfire or rough running condition, especially under load or at idle
- Shaking or vibration felt through the steering wheel or seat
- Reduced engine power and poor acceleration
- A flashing check engine light in severe cases, indicating a misfire that could damage the catalytic converter
- Poor fuel economy or an increase in exhaust emissions

Common causes, most likely first

- 1 Faulty spark plug or ignition coil on cylinder 5
- 2 Clogged or malfunctioning fuel injector for cylinder 5
- 3 Vacuum leak affecting cylinder 5 intake path
- 4 Low compression due to worn piston rings, valves, or head gasket
- 5 Wiring or connector issue to the cylinder 5 injector or ignition coil
- 6 Mechanical valvetrain fault such as a worn cam lobe or collapsed lifter



How to diagnose and fix it

- 1 Perform a visual inspection of the cylinder 5 ignition coil, spark plug, and injector connectors for damage or corrosion
- 2 Swap the ignition coil and spark plug from cylinder 5 with a known-good cylinder to see if the misfire moves
- 3 Use a scan tool to check for pending or stored misfire codes on other cylinders and review freeze-frame data
- 4 Run a compression test and a cylinder leak-down test on cylinder 5 to rule out mechanical faults
- 5 Test the fuel injector for cylinder 5 with a noid light or injector balance test
- 6 Check for vacuum leaks using a smoke machine or propane enrichment test
- 7 If the misfire persists after swapping components, perform a crankshaft position variation relearn or inspect the reluctor wheel

What a cylinder contribution code really means

- A P0275 does not always mean the ignition system is at fault; a dirty or failing fuel injector is a common culprit that many technicians overlook.
The code can be set by a mechanical issue such as a worn camshaft lobe or a sticking valve that does not show up in a simple compression test.
- A vacuum leak at the intake manifold gasket near cylinder 5 can cause a lean misfire that mimics a bad injector.
- Some vehicles require a crankshaft position variation relearn after replacing the engine or flywheel, and failing to do so can set a false P0275.
A flashing check engine light with P0275 indicates a misfire severe enough to damage the catalytic converter, so driving should be limited until repaired.

Can I keep driving with P0275?

It is generally safe to drive with a steady check engine light, but avoid heavy acceleration and prolonged driving until the misfire is diagnosed. If the check engine light is flashing, stop driving as soon as possible to prevent catalytic converter damage.

Tools that help

- OBD-II scan tool with live data and misfire counter capability
- Spark plug socket and wrench
- Compression tester
- Noid light or injector balance tester
- Vacuum gauge or smoke machine
- Digital multimeter



Reading P0275

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

Often seen with

P0171 System Too Lean (Bank 1) · **P0205** Injector Circuit/Open - Cylinder 5 · **P0300** Random/Multiple Cylinder Misfire Detected · **P0305** Cylinder 5 Misfire Detected · **P0355** Ignition Coil 'E' Primary/Secondary Circuit

See it working

Watch the animated explainer [Inline-Four Engine X-Ray: Firing Order 1-3-4-2](#) on Auto Veteran to see the parts involved moving.

Full guide, related articles and animations: <https://www.autoveteran.tech/dtc-codes/p0275/>

