

GENERIC · POWERTRAIN

P03A5

OBD-II DIAGNOSTIC TROUBLE CODE (DTC)

P03A5

Cylinder 2 Pressure Too High

P03A5 is a generic powertrain code indicating that the powertrain control module has detected an abnormally high pressure reading for cylinder 2, typically from a cylinder pressure sensor. The computer compares this signal to expected values and flags the code when the pressure exceeds the calibrated threshold for a set time.

SYSTEM	CODE TYPE	SEVERITY	FIX DIFFICULTY	AREA
Powertrain	Generic (all makes)	Medium	Professional	Ignition system and misfire

Symptoms you may notice

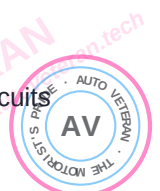
- Illumination of the check engine light, often with no other noticeable symptoms
- Rough idle or misfire sensation, especially when the engine is cold
- Reduced engine power or limp mode in some vehicles
- Knocking or pinging noise under acceleration
- Poor fuel economy or increased emissions
- Hard starting or stalling shortly after startup

Common causes, most likely first

- 1 Faulty cylinder pressure sensor or its wiring/connector
- 2 Carbon buildup on the sensor tip or in the cylinder, causing false high readings
- 3 Mechanical issues such as excessive carbon deposits raising compression
- 4 Engine overheating or pre-ignition causing genuinely high cylinder pressure
- 5 PCM software calibration issue or internal fault
- 6 Restricted exhaust or intake causing abnormal cylinder pressure
- 7 Incorrect fuel octane or heavy knock leading to pressure spikes

How to diagnose and fix it

- 1 Perform a visual inspection of the cylinder 2 pressure sensor and its wiring for damage or corrosion
- 2 Check for technical service bulletins or PCM software updates related to this code
- 3 Use a scan tool to monitor live cylinder pressure data and compare with other cylinders
- 4 Perform a compression test and cylinder leak-down test to rule out mechanical problems
- 5 Inspect the sensor tip for carbon buildup and clean or replace the sensor if necessary
- 6 Check fuel quality and ignition timing; address any knock-related issues
- 7 If all else fails, diagnose the PCM and consider replacement after confirming power and ground circuits



What Most Techs Overlook on P03A5

- A dirty or carbon-fouled pressure sensor can report high pressure without any mechanical fault, so always inspect the sensor tip before condemning internal engine parts.
- This code can be set by a software glitch in the PCM; checking for calibration updates should be part of the diagnostic process.
- Genuine high cylinder pressure is often caused by carbon buildup on pistons or valves, which raises compression ratio and can mimic sensor failure.
- A restricted exhaust system can cause backpressure that affects cylinder pressure readings, so check for clogged catalytic converters or mufflers.
- In some vehicles, P03A5 may be stored alongside misfire codes, but the misfire may be the root cause rather than a separate issue.

Can I keep driving with P03A5?

If the check engine light is on but the engine runs smoothly, you can drive cautiously to a repair shop. Avoid heavy acceleration or towing, and if the engine is knocking, overheating, or losing power, stop driving and seek professional diagnosis immediately.

Tools that help

- OBD-II scan tool with live data capability
- Digital multimeter for circuit testing
- Compression tester
- Cylinder leak-down tester
- Basic hand tools for sensor removal
- Factory service information for specifications

Reading P03A5

P	Powertrain: engine, transmission and emissions.
0	Generic (SAE) code: it means the same thing on every OBD-II vehicle.
3	Ignition system and misfire.
A5	The exact fault within that area.

Often seen with

P0300 Random/Multiple Cylinder Misfire Detected · **P0302** Cylinder 2 Misfire Detected · **P0325** Knock Sensor 1 Circuit Malfunction (Bank 1) · **P03A4** Cylinder 2 Pressure Too Low · **P03A6** Cylinder 2 Pressure Variation Low



See it working

Watch the animated explainer [How a Manual Transmission Works: Four-Speed Cutaway](#) on Auto Veteran to see the parts involved moving.

Full guide, related articles and animations: <https://www.autoveteran.tech/dtc-codes/p03a5/>

