

GENERIC · POWERTRAIN

P0615

OBD-II DIAGNOSTIC TROUBLE CODE (DTC)

P0615

Starter Relay Circuit

P0615 is a generic powertrain code that indicates the powertrain control module (PCM) has detected an abnormal condition in the starter relay control circuit. The PCM monitors the circuit that it uses to command the starter relay on, and when the voltage or current on that circuit falls outside the expected range, it stores this code and may disable the starter relay to protect the circuit.

SYSTEM	CODE TYPE	SEVERITY	FIX DIFFICULTY	AREA
Powertrain	Generic (all makes)	Medium	Intermediate	Computer and output circuits

Symptoms you may notice

- The engine may not crank when the key is turned or the start button is pressed.
- A single click or no sound at all from the starter area when attempting to start.
- The security or immobilizer light may flash or stay on, preventing cranking.
- In some vehicles, the engine may crank but not start if the relay circuit is intermittent.
- Often no symptoms besides the warning light, with the vehicle starting normally.
- The transmission may not shift out of park if the brake-shift interlock is tied to the starter circuit.

Common causes, most likely first

- Faulty starter relay, such as burned contacts or a stuck coil.
- Damaged or corroded wiring in the starter relay control circuit, including open or short circuits.
- Poor connection at the relay socket, PCM connector, or ground point.
- Failed powertrain control module (PCM) driver for the starter relay circuit.
- Blown fuse or fusible link that supplies power to the starter relay coil.
- Aftermarket alarm or remote start system improperly wired into the starter circuit.
- Ignition switch or push-button start failure that does not send a proper start request signal.



How to diagnose and fix it

- 1 Verify the battery is fully charged and the battery terminals are clean and tight, as low voltage can set this code.
- 2 Check all fuses related to the starter relay and ignition system, and replace any that are blown.
- 3 Inspect the starter relay and its socket for corrosion, loose pins, or burn marks, and swap the relay with a known-good identical relay to test.
- 4 Perform a voltage drop test on the starter relay control circuit at the relay and at the PCM to check for excessive resistance.
- 5 Use a scan tool to command the starter relay on and off while listening for the relay to click, confirming PCM control.
- 6 Check for aftermarket accessories wired into the starter circuit and disconnect them to see if the code returns.
- 7 If all circuits test good, diagnose the PCM driver circuit or replace the PCM after confirming power and ground integrity.

Starter relay circuit misdiagnosis traps

- A weak battery or poor battery connection is a common cause of this code because the PCM may see low voltage on the control circuit during cranking.
- The code can be set by a faulty ignition switch or push-button start even when the relay and wiring test good, so always check the start request signal.
- Aftermarket remote start or alarm systems are frequently tapped into the starter relay circuit and can cause intermittent P0615 without obvious wiring damage.
- Some vehicles set P0615 when the transmission range sensor or clutch pedal position sensor is faulty, because the PCM will not command the starter relay without a valid start enable signal.
- Replacing the starter relay without checking the control circuit for a short to ground can lead to repeated relay failures and a misdiagnosis of the PCM.

Can I keep driving with P0615?

If the engine cranks and starts normally, the vehicle can be driven to a repair shop, but avoid turning the engine off in a location where a no-start would be dangerous. If the engine does not crank at all, do not attempt to push-start an automatic and have the vehicle towed to avoid further electrical damage.

Tools that help

- OBD-II scan tool with bidirectional control
- Digital multimeter
- Test light
- Relay puller and spare known-good relay
- Wiring diagram for the starter relay circuit
- Basic hand tools for trim and connector access



Reading P0615

- P** Powertrain: engine, transmission and emissions.
- 0** Generic (SAE) code: it means the same thing on every OBD-II vehicle.
- 6** Computer and output circuits.
- 15** The exact fault within that area.

Often seen with

P1705 Direct Clutch Speed Circuit Fault · **P1705** TCM ECT Sensor Circuit Fault · **P1705** 2-4 Brake Pressure Solenoid Valve Solenoid D Circuit · **P1705** Throttle Position Sensor Circuit AT · **P1705** Starter Lock-Out Backup Lamp Switch S161 · **P1705** Transmission Range Sensor Out Of Self Test Range · **P1705** TCM A/T Gear Position Switch Circuit Shorted · **P1705** P/N Signal Output Circuit · **P1705** Manual Lever Position Sensor Out of Self-Test Range · **P0512** Starter Request Circuit · **P0616** Starter Relay Circuit Low · **P0617** Starter Relay Circuit High · **P0850** Park/Neutral Switch Input Circuit

See it working

Watch the animated explainer [How a Starter Motor Works: Pre-Engaged Starter](#) on Auto Veteran to see the parts involved moving.

Full guide, related articles and animations: <https://www.autoveteran.tech/dtc-codes/p0615/>

