

GENERIC · POWERTRAIN

P073C

OBD-II DIAGNOSTIC TROUBLE CODE (DTC)

P073C

Stuck in Gear 7

P073C indicates that the transmission control module has detected an implausible gear ratio or a mechanical inability to engage seventh gear, meaning the transmission is stuck in or cannot shift into seventh gear. The computer commands seventh gear but sees engine speed and output shaft speed that do not match the expected ratio for that gear.

SYSTEM	CODE TYPE	SEVERITY	FIX DIFFICULTY	AREA
Powertrain	Generic (all makes)	Medium	Professional	Transmission

Symptoms you may notice

- The malfunction indicator lamp (MIL) illuminates on the dashboard.
- The transmission may remain in sixth gear or another gear and refuse to upshift into seventh.
- Harsh or delayed shifts may be felt as the transmission attempts to engage seventh gear.
- The engine may rev higher than normal at highway speeds due to the missing overdrive ratio.
- Often no symptoms besides the warning light, especially if the transmission defaults to a safe gear.
- In some cases, the transmission may enter limp mode, limiting vehicle speed and gear selection.

Common causes, most likely first

- Low or degraded transmission fluid, causing poor hydraulic pressure and shift quality.
- A faulty shift solenoid or solenoid pack responsible for seventh gear engagement.
- Sticking or worn valve body components, such as shift valves or accumulators.
- Internal transmission mechanical failure, such as a worn clutch pack or band for seventh gear.
- A faulty transmission control module (TCM) or corrupted software.
- Wiring or connector issues between the TCM and transmission solenoids or sensors.
- A malfunctioning vehicle speed sensor or output shaft speed sensor providing incorrect data.



How to diagnose and fix it

- 1 Check transmission fluid level and condition; top off or replace fluid if contaminated or low.
- 2 Scan all modules for stored codes and freeze frame data to confirm the fault and identify related issues.
- 3 Inspect wiring and connectors at the transmission and TCM for damage, corrosion, or loose pins.
- 4 Test the shift solenoid(s) for seventh gear with a multimeter and compare to manufacturer specifications.
- 5 Perform a road test with a scan tool to monitor commanded gear versus actual gear ratio and solenoid operation.
- 6 If electrical and hydraulic checks pass, remove the valve body for inspection and cleaning or rebuild.
- 7 If internal mechanical damage is suspected, remove and disassemble the transmission for repair or replacement.

Before you replace the transmission

- A low fluid level or a clogged transmission filter can cause a seventh gear ratio error without any internal damage, so always verify fluid condition first.
The code may be set by a faulty output shaft speed sensor rather than a mechanical problem, and replacing the sensor is far cheaper than transmission work.
- Some vehicles use adaptive learning for shift strategies, and a simple relearn procedure after repairs can prevent the code from returning.
- A stuck open or closed shift solenoid for seventh gear can mimic a major internal failure, so test solenoids before condemning the transmission.
In rare cases, a software glitch in the TCM can trigger P073C, and a reflash or update may resolve it without hardware replacement.

Can I keep driving with P073C?

You can drive the vehicle cautiously to a repair shop, but avoid highway speeds and heavy acceleration because the transmission may not engage seventh gear and could overheat. If the transmission enters limp mode or shifts harshly, stop driving and seek professional diagnosis.

Tools that help

- OBD-II scan tool with live data and bidirectional control
- Digital multimeter
- Transmission fluid level dipstick or inspection tool
- Factory service information for solenoid and valve body specifications
- Jack and jack stands or a lift for under-vehicle access



Reading P073C

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

Often seen with

P0730 Incorrect Gear Ratio · **P0731** Gear 1 Incorrect Ratio · **P0732** Gear 2 Incorrect Ratio · **P0733** Gear 3 Incorrect Ratio · **P0734** Gear 4 Incorrect Ratio

See it working

Watch the animated explainer [How an Automatic Transmission Works, Gear by Gear](#) on Auto Veteran to see the parts involved moving.

Full guide, related articles and animations: <https://www.autoveteran.tech/dtc-codes/p073c/>

