

GENERIC · POWERTRAIN

# P079C

OBD-II DIAGNOSTIC TROUBLE CODE (DTC)

## P079C

### Transmission Friction Element C Slip Detected

P079C indicates that the transmission control module has detected an excessive slip in clutch pack C, meaning the friction element is not holding the gear ratio commanded by the computer. The module compares input and output shaft speeds to calculate slip and sets the code when the discrepancy exceeds a calibrated threshold for a set time.

| SYSTEM     | CODE TYPE           | SEVERITY | FIX DIFFICULTY | AREA         |
|------------|---------------------|----------|----------------|--------------|
| Powertrain | Generic (all makes) | High     | Professional   | Transmission |

### Symptoms you may notice

- Illumination of the check engine light or transmission warning lamp, often with no other symptoms besides the warning light
- Harsh or delayed shifts, especially when engaging the affected gear range
- Slipping sensation or engine flare during acceleration, as if the transmission is in neutral
- Transmission may enter limp mode, limiting vehicle speed and gear selection
- Poor fuel economy or elevated transmission fluid temperature due to continuous slip
- In some cases, a slight shudder or vibration during steady-speed driving

### Common causes, most likely first

- 1 Worn or burned clutch pack C friction plates and steels
- 2 Low transmission fluid level caused by a leak or neglected maintenance
- 3 Deteriorated transmission fluid that no longer provides the correct friction coefficient
- 4 Sticking or faulty shift solenoid or valve body spool valve controlling clutch C apply pressure
- 5 Internal hydraulic leak in the clutch C apply circuit, such as a cracked piston or worn seal
- 6 Faulty transmission speed sensor or damaged wiring affecting slip calculation
- 7 Mechanical damage to the clutch C return spring or drum assembly



## How to diagnose and fix it

- 1 Check transmission fluid level and condition; top off or replace fluid if low or degraded
- 2 Inspect for external fluid leaks around the pan, cooler lines, and seals
- 3 Scan all modules for related codes and freeze-frame data to confirm slip conditions
- 4 Perform a road test with a scan tool monitoring input and output shaft speeds to verify actual slip
- 5 Test the shift solenoid and valve body circuit for clutch C using a bidirectional scan tool or pressure gauge
- 6 Remove the transmission pan to inspect for debris and test solenoid resistance and operation
- 7 If internal damage is confirmed, remove and disassemble the transmission to replace clutch C components and reseat the apply circuit

## What the slip code does not always mean

- A low fluid level from a slow leak is a common cause that mimics internal clutch failure, so always verify fluid level and condition before condemning the transmission.
- A faulty speed sensor or corroded connector can produce slip calculations that trigger P079C even when the clutch pack is mechanically sound.
- Some vehicles set this code after a battery replacement or low voltage event that disrupts the transmission control module adaptive learning, requiring a relearn rather than parts.
- A sticking valve body spool valve can cause intermittent slip that only appears when fluid is cold or under specific load conditions, so a single test drive may not reproduce the fault.
- Debris from a failing torque converter or cooler can contaminate the valve body and cause clutch C apply pressure loss, meaning the root cause may lie outside the transmission itself.

## Can I keep driving with P079C?

Driving with P079C risks further clutch damage and can leave you stranded if the transmission enters limp mode or loses the affected gear entirely. Limit driving to a short distance to a repair shop and avoid heavy acceleration or towing until the fault is diagnosed.

## Tools that help

- OBD-II scan tool with bidirectional control and live data
- Transmission pressure gauge
- Digital multimeter
- Fluid pump and drain pan
- Socket and wrench set
- Jack and jack stands or a lift



## Reading P079C

- P** Powertrain: engine, transmission and emissions.
- 0** Generic (SAE) code: it means the same thing on every OBD-II vehicle.
- 7** Transmission.
- 9C** The exact fault within that area.

## Often seen with

**P0715** Input/Turbine Speed Sensor Circuit Malfunction · **P0730** Incorrect Gear Ratio · **P0741** Torque Converter Clutch Circuit Performance or Stuck Off · **P079B** Transmission Friction Element B Slip Detected · **P079D** Transmission Friction Element D Slip Detected

## 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/p079c/>

