

GENERIC · POWERTRAIN

P079E

OBD-II DIAGNOSTIC TROUBLE CODE (DTC)

P079E

Transmission Friction Element E Slip Detected

P079E indicates that the transmission control module has detected excessive slip in friction element E, which is a clutch or band inside the automatic transmission that should hold firmly when engaged. The computer compares input and output shaft speeds and flags this code when the expected gear ratio is not achieved, meaning the element is not gripping as designed.

SYSTEM

Powertrain

CODE TYPE

Generic (all makes)

SEVERITY

High

FIX DIFFICULTY

Professional

AREA

Transmission

Symptoms you may notice

- Illumination of the check engine light or transmission warning light, often with no other noticeable symptoms
- Harsh or delayed shifts, especially when the affected gear is engaged
- Slipping sensation during acceleration, where engine speed rises without corresponding vehicle speed
- Transmission may enter limp mode, limiting gear selection to a single gear or neutral
- Shuddering or vibration during gear changes
- Poor fuel economy or elevated transmission fluid temperature

Common causes, most likely first

- 1 Worn or burnt friction plates on clutch/band E due to normal wear or overheating
- 2 Low transmission fluid level caused by a leak, leading to insufficient hydraulic pressure
- 3 Deteriorated transmission fluid that no longer provides the correct friction characteristics
- 4 Faulty solenoid or valve body issue that prevents proper hydraulic pressure to element E
- 5 Internal seal failure causing pressure loss to the clutch/band E circuit
- 6 Mechanical damage to the clutch/band E assembly, such as a broken return spring or piston
- 7 Transmission control module (TCM) software calibration issue or faulty pressure sensor



How to diagnose and fix it

- 1 Check transmission fluid level and condition; top off or replace fluid if low or degraded
- 2 Perform a visual inspection for fluid leaks around the transmission pan, cooler lines, and seals
- 3 Use a scan tool to read transmission control module codes and monitor live data for slip and pressure values
- 4 Test the solenoid and valve body operation for element E circuit using a bidirectional scan tool
- 5 Inspect the transmission pan for debris or clutch material, which indicates internal wear
- 6 Perform a pressure test on the element E hydraulic circuit to confirm pressure loss
- 7 If internal damage is confirmed, remove and disassemble the transmission to replace worn clutch/band E components

Before you replace the transmission

- A low fluid level or a clogged transmission filter can cause slip codes without any internal damage, so always verify fluid condition and level first.
- The code may be set by a faulty pressure sensor or solenoid rather than a worn clutch, so live data and circuit tests are essential before condemning the transmission.
- In some vehicles, a software update for the transmission control module can correct false slip detection, so check for technical service bulletins.
- Element E may only be used in certain gears, so slip might only occur under specific driving conditions, making a road test with a scan tool essential.
- Debris in the valve body can cause intermittent pressure loss to element E, and a simple valve body cleaning or replacement may resolve the issue without a full rebuild.

Can I keep driving with P079E?

Driving with P079E is not recommended because continued slipping can overheat and destroy the transmission, leading to a much more expensive repair. If you must drive, avoid heavy acceleration and stop as soon as it is safe to do so.

Tools that help

- OBD-II scan tool with transmission live data capability
- Transmission fluid level dipstick or inspection tool
- Hydraulic pressure gauge
- Multimeter for circuit testing
- Fluid pump and drain pan
- Factory service information for specifications



Reading P079E

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

Often seen with

P0700 Transmission Control System Malfunction · **P0730** Incorrect Gear Ratio · **P0741** Torque Converter Clutch Circuit Performance or Stuck Off · **P079D** Transmission Friction Element D Slip Detected · **P079F** Transmission Friction Element F 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/p079e/>

