

GENERIC · POWERTRAIN

P07A3

OBD-II DIAGNOSTIC TROUBLE CODE (DTC)

P07A3

Transmission Friction Element A Stuck On

P07A3 indicates that the transmission control module (TCM) has detected a hydraulic or mechanical condition where friction element A is applied when it should be released, based on comparing engine speed, turbine speed, output speed, and commanded gear. The TCM sets this code when the monitored slip or ratio for that element falls outside the expected range for the commanded state, meaning the clutch or band is stuck on.

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

Symptoms you may notice

- Harsh or delayed shifts, especially when the element should release during an upshift or downshift
- Transmission stuck in a single gear or fails to engage certain gears, leading to limited vehicle speed
- Engine flare or rpm surge during gear changes as the stuck element fights the intended ratio
- Illuminated malfunction indicator lamp (MIL) with the transmission often entering limp mode
- Often no symptoms besides the warning light if the fault is intermittent or only occurs under specific conditions

Common causes, most likely first

- Sticking or contaminated valve body solenoid or shift valve controlling friction element A
- Internal hydraulic leak or blocked passage in the valve body or case that keeps pressure applied to the element
- Mechanically stuck clutch piston, return spring failure, or warped clutch plates in the element assembly
- Degraded transmission fluid causing varnish or debris that prevents proper valve and piston movement
- Faulty transmission control module (TCM) or wiring issue causing incorrect solenoid command
- Wear in the element's apply circuit, such as a scored bore or leaking seal, that maintains pressure when it should release



How to diagnose and fix it

- 1 Verify fluid level and condition, and check for any stored or pending related codes with a scan tool
- 2 Inspect the transmission wiring harness and solenoid connectors for chafing, corrosion, or loose pins
- 3 Perform a bidirectional solenoid test with a capable scan tool to command element A on and off and observe response
- 4 Remove the transmission pan to inspect for debris, then test the shift solenoid and valve body for sticking or contamination
- 5 Check line pressure and element apply pressure with a gauge during commanded release to confirm a hydraulic stick
- 6 If hydraulic and electrical checks pass, remove and disassemble the transmission to inspect friction element A for mechanical binding
- 7 After repair, clear codes and perform a relearn or adaptation drive cycle to confirm the fix

Why element A sticks on and fools technicians

- A stuck-on friction element often produces no slip code because the element is applied, so the TCM may only flag P07A3 after comparing multiple speed sensors and seeing an impossible ratio.
- Contaminated fluid from a failing cooler or neglected service is a leading cause that many owners miss, and simply replacing the solenoid without flushing the circuit often leads to a repeat failure.
- A binding valve body shift valve can mimic a failed solenoid, so technicians who replace the solenoid first may not fix the root cause and the code returns.
- In some transmissions, a faulty output or turbine speed sensor can create a calculated ratio error that the TCM interprets as a stuck element, so sensor signals must be verified before internal repairs.
- The code does not always mean the transmission must be replaced; a sticking solenoid or valve body repair resolves many cases once the hydraulic circuit is properly cleaned.

Can I keep driving with P07A3?

Driving with P07A3 is not recommended because a stuck friction element can cause harsh engagements, loss of gear, or internal transmission damage. If the vehicle must be moved, keep speeds low and avoid heavy throttle, and have it diagnosed promptly.

Tools that help

- OBD-II scan tool with bidirectional control and transmission data streaming
- Transmission pressure gauge set
- Digital multimeter for circuit and solenoid resistance checks
- Fluid pump and pan removal tools for service inspection
- Factory or equivalent service information for element apply circuits and solenoid testing



Reading P07A3

- P** Powertrain: engine, transmission and emissions.
- 0** Generic (SAE) code: it means the same thing on every OBD-II vehicle.
- 7** Transmission.
- A3** The exact fault within that area.

Often seen with

P0730 Incorrect Gear Ratio · **P0741** Torque Converter Clutch Circuit Performance or Stuck Off · **P07A0** Transmission Friction Element G Slip Detected · **P07A1** Transmission Friction Element H Slip Detected · **P07A2** Transmission Friction Element A Performance/Stuck Off

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/p07a3/>

