

GENERIC · POWERTRAIN

P0865

OBD-II DIAGNOSTIC TROUBLE CODE (DTC)

P0865

TCM Communication Circuit Low

P0865 means the transmission control module (TCM) has detected that the communication circuit between it and another module or sensor is reading a voltage lower than expected, indicating a short to ground or an open circuit on that data line. The TCM sets this code when the signal voltage on the dedicated communication wire stays below a calibrated threshold for a set period, preventing reliable data exchange.

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

Symptoms you may notice

- Illumination of the malfunction indicator lamp (MIL) on the dashboard
- Often no symptoms besides the warning light, especially if the fault is intermittent
- Harsh or erratic transmission shifting, or the transmission stuck in limp mode
- Failure of the transmission to engage certain gears or a loss of power to the wheels
- Inconsistent operation of dashboard gear indicators or other driver information displays

Common causes, most likely first

- 1 Damaged or chafed wiring in the communication circuit between the TCM and the affected module
- 2 Corroded, loose, or disconnected electrical connector at the TCM or the other module
- 3 Failed TCM or a faulty module on the communication bus
- 4 Short to ground in the communication wire due to insulation damage or moisture intrusion
- 5 Internal failure within the TCM's communication driver circuit
- 6 Poor ground connection for the TCM or the communication circuit

How to diagnose and fix it

- 1 Inspect the TCM and related module connectors for corrosion, tightness, and proper seating, then clean and reseal as needed
- 2 Check the communication circuit wiring for visible damage, chafing, or pinched sections, and repair any faults found
- 3 Measure resistance and voltage on the communication circuit to verify continuity and check for a short to ground
- 4 Test the TCM ground circuit for excessive resistance and repair any poor ground connections
- 5 Substitute a known-good TCM or the other module on the communication bus to isolate the faulty component
- 6 Clear the diagnostic trouble codes and perform a road test to confirm the repair and ensure the code does not return



Communication circuit faults often misdiagnosed

- A low voltage on the communication circuit can be caused by a faulty module on the same bus pulling the line down, not just the TCM itself.
- Intermittent P0865 codes often stem from a loose ground connection or a connector that vibrates loose under driving conditions, so wiggle tests are essential.
- The code does not always mean the TCM has failed; a shorted sensor or actuator sharing the same reference voltage can drag the communication line low.
- Aftermarket electrical accessories or poor previous repairs to the wiring harness are common culprits that introduce shorts or opens in the communication circuit.
- Some vehicles require a relearn or calibration procedure after repairing the communication circuit, and skipping it can cause the code to reset even with a proper repair.

Can I keep driving with P0865?

If the vehicle drives normally with only the warning light on, you can drive it to a repair shop, but avoid long trips or heavy loads. If the transmission is in limp mode or shifting erratically, limit driving to a short distance to a safe location and seek professional diagnosis promptly.

Tools that help

- OBD-II scan tool with live data capability
- Digital multimeter
- Wiring diagram for the specific vehicle
- Terminal test kit and back-probe pins
- Insulation piercing probes or breakout box

Reading P0865

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

Often seen with

P0700 Transmission Control System Malfunction · **P0864** TCM Communication Circuit Range/Performance · **P0866** TCM Communication Circuit High · **U0100** Lost Communication With ECM/PCM A · **U0101** Lost Communication with TCM



See it working

Watch the animated explainer [How the PCV System Works: Crankcase Ventilation](#) on Auto Veteran to see the parts involved moving.

Full guide, related articles and animations: <https://www.autoveteran.tech/dtc-codes/p0865/>

