

GENERIC · POWERTRAIN

P0868

OBD-II DIAGNOSTIC TROUBLE CODE (DTC)

P0868

Transmission Fluid Pressure Low

P0868 indicates that the transmission control module has detected a low fluid pressure condition in the automatic transmission, typically by comparing the commanded pressure to the actual pressure reported by a transmission fluid pressure sensor. This means the hydraulic system is not building or maintaining the pressure required for proper clutch and band application, which can lead to poor shift quality or slipping.

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 light, often with no other noticeable symptoms
- Harsh or delayed gear engagements, especially when shifting from park to drive or reverse
- Slipping during acceleration or while climbing hills, with engine RPM flaring between shifts
- Transmission may enter limp mode, limiting vehicle speed and gear selection
- Shuddering or vibration during gear changes
- In severe cases, the vehicle may refuse to move or lose drive entirely

Common causes, most likely first

- 1 Low transmission fluid level due to a leak or lack of maintenance
- 2 Degraded or contaminated transmission fluid causing pressure loss
- 3 Faulty transmission fluid pressure sensor or its wiring
- 4 Sticking or failed pressure control solenoid
- 5 Worn transmission pump or internal hydraulic leaks
- 6 Clogged transmission filter or restricted fluid passage
- 7 Internal mechanical wear in the valve body or clutch packs

How to diagnose and fix it

- 1 Check transmission fluid level and condition; top off or replace fluid as needed
- 2 Inspect for external fluid leaks around the pan, cooler lines, and seals
- 3 Scan the transmission control module for stored codes and freeze-frame data to verify sensor readings
- 4 Test the transmission fluid pressure sensor and its circuit with a multimeter or scan tool
- 5 Perform a pressure test using a mechanical gauge to compare actual line pressure to specifications
- 6 Inspect and test the pressure control solenoid and valve body for proper operation
- 7 If internal damage is suspected, remove the transmission for bench inspection and repair



Don't overlook the simple checks first

- A low fluid level from a slow leak is the most common cause, yet many technicians jump straight to replacing solenoids without checking the dipstick or fluid condition.
- The code can be set by a faulty pressure sensor that reports low pressure even when the hydraulic system is functioning correctly, so always verify actual pressure with a mechanical gauge.
- On some vehicles, a weak battery or charging system issue can cause erratic sensor readings and set this code, so check the electrical system before condemning transmission internals.
- After repairs, the transmission adaptive learning values must be reset and a relearn drive cycle performed, otherwise the code may return even with a correct repair.
- This code is often accompanied by other transmission codes like P0730 or P0740, which can help pinpoint whether the issue is electrical or hydraulic.

Can I keep driving with P0868?

If the vehicle is in limp mode or noticeably slipping, avoid driving it to prevent further transmission damage and arrange for a tow. If the only symptom is the warning light and the vehicle drives normally, you can drive cautiously to a repair shop, but avoid heavy acceleration or towing.

Tools that help

- OBD-II scan tool with transmission module capability
- Transmission fluid pressure gauge kit
- Multimeter for electrical testing
- Fluid pump or funnel for topping off fluid
- Socket set and wrenches for inspecting sensors and pan

Reading P0868

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

Often seen with

P0730 Incorrect Gear Ratio · **P0740** Torque Converter Clutch Circuit Malfunction · **P0841** Transmission Fluid Pressure Sensor/Switch 'A' Circuit Range/ · **P0867** Transmission Fluid Pressure · **P0869** Transmission Fluid Pressure High



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/p0868/>

