

GENERIC · POWERTRAIN

P0879

OBD-II DIAGNOSTIC TROUBLE CODE (DTC)

P0879

Transmission Fluid Pressure Sensor/Switch 'D' Circuit Intermittent

P0879 indicates that the transmission control module has detected an intermittent fault in the electrical circuit for transmission fluid pressure sensor or switch 'D', which is typically used to monitor pressure in a specific hydraulic circuit such as a clutch pack or line pressure. The circuit works correctly at times but cuts out or sends erratic signals, so the module cannot trust the pressure reading and sets this code.

SYSTEM

Powertrain

CODE TYPE

Generic (all makes)

SEVERITY

Medium

FIX DIFFICULTY

Intermediate

AREA

Transmission

Symptoms you may notice

- Illumination of the check engine light or transmission warning lamp, often with no other noticeable symptoms
- Harsh or delayed gear shifts, especially when the transmission is cold or under load
- The transmission may enter limp mode, sticking in a single gear or refusing to downshift
- Intermittent slipping or flaring during acceleration when the faulty circuit acts up
- A stored code that clears itself and returns after several drive cycles

Common causes, most likely first

- 1 Damaged or chafed wiring harness between the pressure sensor/switch 'D' and the transmission control module
- 2 Corroded, loose, or water-intruded electrical connector at the sensor or switch
- 3 Internally failing transmission fluid pressure sensor or switch 'D' that works intermittently
- 4 Low or contaminated transmission fluid causing erratic pressure readings that trigger the intermittent fault
- 5 Faulty transmission control module or a software calibration issue affecting signal interpretation
- 6 Debris or sludge blocking the hydraulic passage to the sensor, causing pressure pulsations that confuse the sensor



How to diagnose and fix it

- 1 Verify battery voltage and ground connections, then clear the code and test-drive to confirm it returns
- 2 Inspect the sensor/switch 'D' connector and wiring for corrosion, chafing, or loose pins, repairing as needed
- 3 Check transmission fluid level and condition, topping off or servicing fluid if it is low or burnt
- 4 Back-probe the sensor signal circuit and monitor live data for dropouts while wiggling the harness and driving
- 5 Test the sensor/switch 'D' with a multimeter for resistance or voltage changes that match pressure changes
- 6 Replace the faulty pressure sensor or switch 'D' if electrical tests confirm it is failing intermittently
- 7 If all external circuits and the sensor test good, diagnose the transmission control module and its software calibration

Intermittent faults hide in plain sight

- A code that sets only once every few drive cycles often points to a wiring harness rubbed through at a bend or near a hot exhaust component, not a failed sensor.
- Technicians who replace the sensor without wiggling the harness under load frequently see the code return because the intermittent short or open was in the connector all along.
- Low transmission fluid from a slow leak can cause pressure pulsations that make sensor 'D' report erratic values, so always check fluid level before condemning electrical parts.
- On some vehicles, a failing transmission control module ground can mimic a sensor circuit fault, so voltage drop testing the module ground is a worthwhile step.
- This code does not always mean the transmission is mechanically damaged; many cases are resolved with a connector repair or fluid service.

Can I keep driving with P0879?

You can usually drive the vehicle short distances to a repair shop, but avoid heavy acceleration, towing, or long highway trips because the intermittent fault can cause harsh shifts or sudden limp mode. If the transmission slips or refuses to shift, stop driving and have it towed.

Tools that help

- OBD-II scan tool with live transmission data capability
- Digital multimeter with back-probe pins
- Wiring diagram for the transmission pressure sensor circuit
- Transmission fluid level dipstick or scan tool fluid level check function
- Basic hand tools for connector and sensor access



Reading P0879

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

Often seen with

P0715 Input/Turbine Speed Sensor Circuit Malfunction · **P0841** Transmission Fluid Pressure Sensor/Switch 'A' Circuit Range/ · **P0876** Transmission Fluid Pressure Sensor/Switch 'D' Circuit Range/ · **P0877** Transmission Fluid Pressure Sensor/Switch 'D' Circuit Low · **P0878** Transmission Fluid Pressure Sensor/Switch 'D' Circuit 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/p0879/>

