

GENERIC · POWERTRAIN

P0944

OBD-II DIAGNOSTIC TROUBLE CODE (DTC)

P0944

Hydraulic Pressure Unit Loss of Pressure

P0944 means the transmission control module (TCM) has detected that the hydraulic pressure unit is not building or holding the pressure it commands, so the unit has effectively lost pressure. The computer compares commanded pressure against actual pressure from a sensor and sets the code when the two disagree beyond a calibrated threshold.

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

Symptoms you may notice

- Illumination of the transmission or check engine light, often with no other symptoms besides the warning light
- Harsh or delayed shifts, especially when engaging drive or reverse from a stop
- Transmission slipping under acceleration or failing to hold a gear
- Limp-home mode with a single fixed gear or reduced power
- Whining or buzzing noise from the transmission area when the pump is starved of fluid
- In severe cases, the vehicle refuses to move or loses forward/reverse engagement entirely

Common causes, most likely first

- 1 Low or contaminated automatic transmission fluid (ATF) from a leak, incorrect fill level, or neglected service
- 2 A failing hydraulic pressure unit, including a worn pressure regulator valve or solenoid that cannot hold commanded pressure
- 3 A faulty pressure sensor that reports low pressure when the unit is actually working correctly
- 4 A clogged transmission filter or restricted fluid pickup that starves the pump
- 5 Internal leaks from worn seals, valve body gaskets, or a cracked pressure unit housing
- 6 A weak or failing transmission fluid pump that cannot supply the required volume
- 7 Wiring or connector faults between the pressure sensor, solenoid, and TCM that corrupt the pressure signal



How to diagnose and fix it

- 1 Check the ATF level and condition first, looking for low level, burnt smell, or metallic debris, and top up or service as needed
- 2 Scan all modules for related codes and freeze-frame data to see the commanded versus actual pressure at the moment the code set
- 3 Inspect the transmission wiring harness and pressure sensor connector for chafing, corrosion, or loose pins
- 4 Test the pressure sensor and pressure control solenoid with a multimeter and, where specified, a pressure gauge at the test port
- 5 Replace the transmission filter and fluid if the unit is starved or contaminated, then clear the code and road test
- 6 If pressure still drops, remove and inspect the hydraulic pressure unit and valve body for stuck valves, worn bores, or damaged seals
- 7 Repair or replace the pressure unit, pump, or internal seals as indicated, then verify with a live pressure reading and a full drive cycle

What P0944 does not always mean

- A low fluid level from a slow leak is the most common cause of P0944, and many pressure units are replaced when a simple fluid service and leak repair would have fixed it.
- A failing pressure sensor can report low pressure while the hydraulic unit is healthy, so always compare the sensor reading against a mechanical gauge before condemning the unit.
- The code can be set by a restricted filter or pickup rather than a failed pump, especially after a neglected service interval or after debris from a previous failure.
- Intermittent wiring faults at the pressure sensor connector can mimic a pressure loss and set P0944 without any mechanical problem inside the transmission.
- Some vehicles set P0944 as a companion code when another transmission fault forces the unit into a default pressure mode, so diagnose all stored codes before replacing parts.

Can I keep driving with P0944?

Stop driving as soon as it is safe to do so, because continued operation with low hydraulic pressure can destroy clutches and the transmission itself. If the vehicle must be moved, keep it to a short distance at low speed and avoid heavy acceleration or towing.

Tools that help

- OBD-II scan tool with transmission module and live-data capability
- Digital multimeter for sensor and solenoid circuit testing
- Transmission pressure gauge kit for mechanical pressure verification
- Fluid pump and drain pan for ATF service
- Factory service information for pressure specifications and test ports



Reading P0944

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

Often seen with

P0741 Torque Converter Clutch Circuit Performance or Stuck Off · **P0868** Transmission Fluid Pressure Low · **P0942** Hydraulic Pressure Unit · **P0943** Hydraulic Pressure Unit Cycling Period Too Short · **P0945** Hydraulic Pump Relay Circuit/Open

See it working

Watch the animated explainer [How a Car Clutch Works: Diaphragm Clutch Cutaway](#) on Auto Veteran to see the parts involved moving.

Full guide, related articles and animations: <https://www.autoveteran.tech/dtc-codes/p0944/>

