

GENERIC · POWERTRAIN

P265E

OBD-II DIAGNOSTIC TROUBLE CODE (DTC)

P265E

B Rocker Arm Actuator Position Sensor Circuit Intermittent/Erratic Bank 1

P265E indicates that the powertrain control module (PCM) has detected an intermittent or erratic signal from the rocker arm actuator position sensor on bank 1. This sensor monitors the position of the rocker arm actuator, which is part of a variable valve timing or cylinder deactivation system, and the PCM sets the code when the signal momentarily drops out or jumps erratically beyond expected limits.

SYSTEM	CODE TYPE	SEVERITY	FIX DIFFICULTY	AREA
Powertrain	Generic (all makes)	Medium	Professional	Computer and output circuits

Symptoms you may notice

- Illumination of the check engine light, often with no other noticeable symptoms.
- Rough idle or misfire, particularly when the engine is cold or under light load.
- Reduced engine power or hesitation during acceleration.
- Poor fuel economy or increased emissions.
- In rare cases, a ticking or tapping noise from the valvetrain area.

Common causes, most likely first

- 1 Faulty rocker arm actuator position sensor or its internal circuitry.
- 2 Damaged, chafed, or corroded wiring or connector at the sensor or PCM.
- 3 Oil sludge or debris obstructing the actuator, causing erratic sensor readings.
- 4 Mechanical wear in the rocker arm actuator assembly or associated components.
- 5 Low engine oil level or pressure affecting actuator operation.
- 6 PCM software issue or internal fault in the sensor signal processing circuit.

How to diagnose and fix it

- 1 Perform a visual inspection of the sensor, connector, and wiring for damage or corrosion.
- 2 Check engine oil level and condition; top off or change oil if contaminated.
- 3 Use a scan tool to monitor live sensor data for erratic signals and compare with bank 2 if applicable.
- 4 Test the sensor with a multimeter for resistance and voltage output according to manufacturer specifications.
- 5 Inspect the rocker arm actuator for mechanical binding or sludge buildup; clean or replace as needed.
- 6 Repair or replace damaged wiring and connectors, then clear codes and verify the repair.
- 7 If the sensor and wiring are good, reprogram or replace the PCM as a last resort.



Oil Quality and Sensor Signal Traps

- A low oil level or degraded oil is a common cause of this code because the rocker arm actuator relies on proper oil pressure to function, and the sensor may read erratically when oil flow is inconsistent.
- The code can be set by a momentary glitch that does not recur, so always check for stored history codes and freeze-frame data before replacing parts.
- Wiring harness damage near hot exhaust components or sharp edges is often overlooked, leading to unnecessary sensor replacement.
- On engines with cylinder deactivation, a faulty rocker arm actuator position sensor can cause the system to disable deactivation, resulting in reduced fuel economy without obvious driveability symptoms.
- After repairs, a relearn or calibration procedure may be required for the actuator position sensor to prevent the code from returning.

Can I keep driving with P265E?

The vehicle is generally safe to drive with this code, but avoid aggressive acceleration or heavy loads until diagnosed, as prolonged driving with an erratic actuator signal can lead to misfires or catalytic converter damage.

Tools that help

- OBD-II scan tool with live data capability
- Digital multimeter
- Basic hand tools (socket set, screwdrivers)
- Feeler gauges or manufacturer-specific sensor test equipment
- Oil pressure gauge

Reading P265E

P	Powertrain: engine, transmission and emissions.
2	Generic (SAE) code: it means the same thing on every OBD-II vehicle.
6	Computer and output circuits.
5E	The exact fault within that area.

Often seen with

P0300 Random/Multiple Cylinder Misfire Detected · **P265B** B Rocker Arm Actuator Position Sensor Circuit Range/Performance · **P265C** B Rocker Arm Actuator Position Sensor Circuit Low Bank 1 · **P265D** B Rocker Arm Actuator Position Sensor Circuit High Bank 1 · **P265F** Variable A/C Compressor Control Circuit Range/Performance



See it working

Watch the animated explainer [How a Refrigerator Works: The Cooling Cycle](#) on Auto Veteran to see the parts involved moving.

Full guide, related articles and animations: <https://www.autoveteran.tech/dtc-codes/p265e/>

