

SUBARU · POWERTRAIN

P1544

OBD-II DIAGNOSTIC TROUBLE CODE (DTC)

P1544 · Subaru

High Exhaust Temperature Detected

P1544 on Subaru vehicles means the engine control module (ECM) has calculated an exhaust gas temperature that exceeds the safe limit, typically based on input from the exhaust temperature sensor. The computer is protecting the turbocharger and catalytic converter from heat damage by flagging this condition.

SYSTEM	CODE TYPE	SEVERITY	FIX DIFFICULTY	AREA
Powertrain	Subaru specific	Medium	Professional	Vehicle speed, idle control and auxiliary inputs

Symptoms you may notice

- Check Engine Light or warning message on the dashboard, often with no other noticeable symptoms
- Reduced engine power or limp mode when the ECM derates output to lower exhaust temperature
- Poor fuel economy or rough running if the condition is caused by an overly rich or lean mixture
- In rare cases, a burning or hot metal smell from the exhaust area after aggressive driving
- Intermittent warning light that appears during heavy load or uphill driving and clears later

Common causes, most likely first

- Faulty exhaust gas temperature sensor or its wiring, sending a falsely high reading to the ECM
- Restricted or clogged catalytic converter or diesel particulate filter (DPF) causing heat to build up
- Overly rich fuel mixture from leaking injectors, high fuel pressure, or a faulty mass airflow (MAF) sensor
- Retarded ignition timing or incorrect camshaft timing that raises exhaust gas temperature
- Turbocharger wastegate or boost control fault causing overboost and excessive exhaust heat
- Cooling system issue such as low coolant or a stuck thermostat that raises overall engine temperature
- ECM software calibration issue or internal fault in the temperature signal processing circuit

How to diagnose and fix it

- Scan all modules for stored and pending codes, and record freeze-frame data to see when P1544 set
- Inspect the exhaust gas temperature sensor and its wiring for damage, corrosion, or loose connectors
- Compare live exhaust temperature readings from the sensor against actual conditions using a scan tool
- Check fuel trim and mass airflow readings to rule out a rich or lean mixture causing high exhaust heat
- Perform a backpressure test on the exhaust system to detect a restricted catalytic converter or DPF
- Verify ignition timing and camshaft timing are within specification, and check for boost control faults
- If all inputs are correct, follow Subaru service procedures to update or replace the ECM as a last resort



What Subaru techs check before replacing sensors

- A P1544 often sets because the exhaust temperature sensor connector has corroded, not because the sensor itself has failed, so inspect the plug before condemning the part.
- On turbocharged Subarus, a sticking wastegate or a failed boost control solenoid can raise exhaust temperature enough to trigger P1544 without any sensor fault at all.
- A clogged catalytic converter on a high-mileage Subaru can cause this code even when the engine runs perfectly, so a backpressure test is more reliable than guessing from symptoms.
- The ECM may command reduced boost or fuel delivery when P1544 is active, so a driver might notice power loss that disappears after the code is cleared, masking the real cause.
- Do not assume P1544 means the catalytic converter is melted; a lean misfire from a bad ignition coil can push exhaust temperature up quickly and set this code first.

Can I keep driving with P1544?

You can usually drive a Subaru with P1544 to a workshop, but avoid heavy throttle, towing, or sustained uphill loads because excessive exhaust heat can damage the turbocharger or catalytic converter. If the engine runs rough or the warning light flashes, stop driving and have it towed.

Tools that help

- OBD-II scan tool with live data and freeze-frame capability
- Infrared thermometer for checking exhaust component temperatures
- Digital multimeter for testing sensor resistance and wiring continuity
- Exhaust backpressure gauge
- Fuel pressure gauge
- Subaru-specific diagnostic software or factory service information

Reading P1544

P	Powertrain: engine, transmission and emissions.
1	Manufacturer-specific code (Subaru): its meaning depends on the make.
5	Vehicle speed, idle control and auxiliary inputs.
44	The exact fault within that area.

Often seen with

P0171 System Too Lean (Bank 1) · **P0172** System Too Rich (Bank 1) · **P0234** Engine Overboost Condition · **P0420** Catalyst System Efficiency Below Threshold (Bank 1) · **P0546** Exhaust Gas Temperature Sensor Circuit High (Bank 1 Sensor 1)



See it working

Watch the animated explainer [How Crank and Cam Position Sensors Work](#) on Auto Veteran to see the parts involved moving.

Full guide, related articles and animations: <https://www.autoveteran.tech/dtc-codes/subaru-p1544/>

