

GENERIC · NETWORK

U0101

OBD-II DIAGNOSTIC TROUBLE CODE (DTC)

U0101

Lost Communication with TCM

U0101 is a generic network communication code indicating that the engine control module (ECM) or another module on the controller area network (CAN) bus has stopped receiving messages from the transmission control module (TCM). The ECM sets this code when it expects regular TCM data frames and none arrive within a calibrated timeout window, often because the TCM lost power, ground, or bus connectivity.

SYSTEM	CODE TYPE	SEVERITY	FIX DIFFICULTY	AREA
Network	Generic (all makes)	Medium	Professional	Lost communication with a control module

Symptoms you may notice

- Illuminated check engine light or service transmission message
- Transmission stuck in a default gear or limp mode with harsh shifting
- No upshift or downshift response, or the transmission remains in one gear
- Speedometer, gear indicator, or other dash displays may be inoperative or erratic
- Engine may crank but fail to start if the TCM is part of the immobilizer or start-authorization path
- Often no symptoms besides the warning light if communication is intermittent

Common causes, most likely first

- 1 Blown fuse or poor connection at the TCM power or ground circuit
- 2 Corroded, loose, or damaged TCM connector pins or terminals
- 3 Open or shorted CAN bus wiring between the ECM and TCM
- 4 Failed TCM internal fault causing it to drop off the network
- 5 Low battery voltage or charging system fault causing modules to shut down
- 6 Aftermarket electronics or poor installation disturbing bus voltage
- 7 Failed ECM communication interface (less common)



How to diagnose and fix it

- 1 Scan all modules for communication codes and record which modules are online
- 2 Check battery voltage and charging system output before any module testing
- 3 Inspect and test the TCM fuse, relay, power, and ground circuits with a multimeter
- 4 Disconnect and inspect TCM and ECM connectors for corrosion, pushed pins, or water intrusion
- 5 Measure CAN bus resistance and voltage at the diagnostic connector to confirm bus integrity
- 6 Perform a wiggle test on harness sections while watching live communication status
- 7 If wiring and power are confirmed good, substitute a known-good TCM or perform module reprogramming as required

What U0101 Often Really Means

- A dead battery or recent jump-start can set U0101 as a history code even when the TCM is healthy, so clear and recheck before condemning parts.
- Many technicians replace the TCM only to find a corroded ground strap or chafed harness behind the engine block was the real cause of the lost communication.
- U0101 does not always mean the TCM is bad; the ECM may simply be missing one message due to a brief voltage dip during cranking.
- Aftermarket remote starters, alarms, or poor stereo installs can back-feed the bus and disrupt TCM messages without any hard wiring fault.
- On some vehicles the TCM is integrated into the valve body or mechatronic unit, so communication loss can follow a transmission fluid leak or internal heat damage.

Can I keep driving with U0101?

If the transmission is in limp mode or shifting harshly, drive only to a safe location or repair shop and avoid highway speeds. If the vehicle drives normally with only a warning light, keep trips short and schedule diagnosis soon, because intermittent communication loss can suddenly leave you without gear selection.

Tools that help

- OBD-II scan tool with full module communication and live data capability
- Digital multimeter with min/max recording
- CAN bus breakout box or oscilloscope
- Factory service information for wiring diagrams and TCM pinouts
- Battery load tester and charging system tester



Reading U0101

- U** Network: communication between the vehicle's control modules.
- 0** Generic (SAE) code: it means the same thing on every OBD-II vehicle.
- 1** Lost communication with a control module.
- 01** The exact fault within that area.

Often seen with

P0700 Transmission Control System Malfunction · **U0100** Lost Communication With ECM/PCM A · **U0102** Lost Communication with Transfer Case Control Module · **U0121** Lost Communication With Anti-Lock Brake System (ABS) Control · **U0140** Lost Communication With Instrument Panel Cluster

See it working

Watch the animated explainer [Car Won't Start? Step-by-Step No-Start Diagnosis](#) on Auto Veteran to see the parts involved moving.

Full guide, related articles and animations: <https://www.autoveteran.tech/dtc-codes/u0101/>

