

GENERIC · NETWORK

U0116

OBD-II DIAGNOSTIC TROUBLE CODE (DTC)

U0116

Lost Communication with Steering Effort Control Module

U0116 is a communication fault that sets when the vehicle's main control modules stop receiving data from the steering effort control module over the controller area network (CAN) bus. The computer has detected a loss of the periodic messages that module is supposed to broadcast, not necessarily a failure of the steering system itself.

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

Symptoms you may notice

- A steering warning light or stability control warning light illuminated on the dashboard
- Heavier or inconsistent steering effort, especially at low speeds or during parking maneuvers
- A message on the driver information display indicating a steering system fault or reduced assist
- The vehicle may default to a fixed steering assist level or disable certain driver-assist features
- Often no symptoms besides the warning light, with steering feel unchanged in normal driving

Common causes, most likely first

- 1 A weak or failing 12-volt battery or poor battery terminal connection causing low voltage to the steering effort control module
- 2 Corroded, loose, or damaged wiring and connectors at the steering effort control module or along the CAN bus
- 3 A failed steering effort control module, often due to internal electronic fault or water intrusion
- 4 A blown fuse or relay supplying power to the steering effort control module
- 5 CAN bus wiring damage from rodent chewing, chafing, or collision repair
- 6 A faulty ground connection for the steering effort control module
- 7 Less commonly, a software glitch in another module that disrupts bus communication



How to diagnose and fix it

- 1 Perform a battery and charging system test, including load test and voltage drop checks on the battery cables
- 2 Inspect and clean the steering effort control module connectors, checking for corrosion, pushed pins, or water intrusion
- 3 Check all fuses and relays that supply power to the steering effort control module, replacing any that are blown
- 4 Use a scan tool to read live data and confirm whether the module is completely offline or intermittently dropping messages
- 5 Perform a voltage drop test on the CAN bus wiring and check for shorts to ground or power
- 6 Verify the ground circuit for the steering effort control module with a multimeter under load
- 7 If all wiring and power checks pass, replace and reprogram the steering effort control module following manufacturer procedures

What most technicians overlook on U0116

- A weak battery is the most common root cause of U0116 on modern vehicles, because the steering effort control module may brown out and stop communicating before other modules show any problem.
- The code does not always mean the steering effort control module itself has failed; a single chafed CAN wire anywhere between the module and the gateway can set the same code.
- After replacing the steering effort control module, many vehicles require a steering angle sensor calibration and a module configuration or programming step, or the code will reset immediately.
- Intermittent U0116 codes that appear only in cold or wet weather often point to a connector with poor pin tension or water intrusion rather than a failed module.
- Some vehicles set U0116 as a secondary code when the anti-lock brake system (ABS) or stability control module is offline, so always check for other communication codes before condemning the steering module.

Can I keep driving with U0116?

You can usually drive the vehicle to a repair shop, but expect heavier steering effort and reduced driver-assist features. Avoid high-speed maneuvers and parking situations that require maximum steering assist until the fault is repaired.

Tools that help

- OBD-II scan tool with live data and module communication capabilities
- Digital multimeter with voltage drop and resistance functions
- Battery load tester and charging system tester
- Wiring diagram and connector pinout for the steering effort control module
- Trim removal tools and contact cleaner for connector inspection



Reading U0116

- 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.
- 16** The exact fault within that area.

Often seen with

U0100 Lost Communication With ECM/PCM A · **U0121** Lost Communication With Anti-Lock Brake System (ABS) Control · **U0131** Lost Communication With Power Steering Control Module · **U0140** Lost Communication With Instrument Panel Cluster

See it working

Watch the animated explainer [How ABS Works: Anti-Lock Brakes in X-Ray](#) on Auto Veteran to see the parts involved moving.

Full guide, related articles and animations: <https://www.autoveteran.tech/dtc-codes/u0116/>

