

GENERIC · NETWORK

# U0131

OBD-II DIAGNOSTIC TROUBLE CODE (DTC)

## U0131

# Lost Communication With Power Steering Control Module

U0131 means the vehicle's main communication network has lost contact with the Power Steering Control Module (PSCM), the computer that manages electric power steering assist. The module that monitors the network, typically the body control module or gateway, has stopped receiving the periodic CAN messages the PSCM is supposed to broadcast, so it flags the module as missing rather than reporting a steering fault itself.

|                          |                                         |                           |                                       |                                                         |
|--------------------------|-----------------------------------------|---------------------------|---------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------|
| SYSTEM<br><b>Network</b> | CODE TYPE<br><b>Generic (all makes)</b> | SEVERITY<br><b>Medium</b> | FIX DIFFICULTY<br><b>Professional</b> | AREA<br><b>Lost communication with a control module</b> |
|--------------------------|-----------------------------------------|---------------------------|---------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------|

## Symptoms you may notice

- The power steering warning light or a red steering wheel icon illuminated on the dash
- Heavier than normal steering effort, especially at low speed or during parking maneuvers
- A message such as 'Power Steering Assist Fault' or 'Service Power Steering' displayed in the driver information center
- The steering assist cutting in and out intermittently while driving
- Often no symptoms besides the warning light, with steering feel completely normal
- Multiple unrelated warning lights or a no-start condition if the fault lies on a shared network bus

## Common causes, most likely first

- 1 A weak or failing 12-volt battery or poor battery terminal connection causing low-voltage communication dropouts
- 2 Corroded, loose, or damaged connectors at the PSCM, especially where the harness passes through the steering rack area
- 3 A chafed, pinched, or open CAN bus wire between the PSCM and the network gateway or body control module
- 4 A failed PSCM due to internal electronics fault or water intrusion into the module housing
- 5 Blown fuse or poor ground connection serving the PSCM circuit
- 6 A network communication fault elsewhere on the same bus that disrupts messages to and from the PSCM
- 7 Aftermarket accessories or improper jump-starting that introduced voltage spikes or bus interference



## How to diagnose and fix it

- 1 Perform a full battery and charging system test, including load test and voltage drop checks on both battery cables
- 2 Scan all modules for communication codes and record which modules are online to determine whether the PSCM is completely offline or only intermittently dropping out
- 3 Inspect the PSCM connectors and harness for corrosion, pushed pins, chafing, and water intrusion, then clean and reseat them
- 4 Check the PSCM fuse and verify ground integrity with a voltage drop test under load
- 5 Measure CAN bus resistance and voltage at the PSCM connector to confirm the bus is intact and the module is receiving power and ground
- 6 If wiring and power are good, substitute a known-good PSCM or perform a module communication test with a capable scan tool to confirm the module itself has failed
- 7 After any repair, clear codes and verify communication is restored, then perform any required steering angle sensor calibration or module programming

## Why a dead battery sets U0131

- A marginal battery is the most common root cause of U0131 on vehicles that otherwise steer fine, because the PSCM drops offline during cranking when system voltage sags below its operating threshold.
- U0131 does not mean the steering rack is mechanically broken; it only reports that the network cannot hear the module, so replacing the rack before checking power, ground, and bus wiring wastes money.
- Water intrusion into the PSCM connector or housing is a frequent hidden cause on vehicles where the module is mounted low on the steering gear or behind a wheel arch liner.
- A single failed module on the bus can pull the entire network down and set U0131 alongside codes for other missing modules, so always check whether the PSCM is the only module offline.
- Jump-starting or charging the battery with the ignition on can create voltage spikes that corrupt module memory and set communication codes that persist until cleared.

## Can I keep driving with U0131?

The vehicle remains steerable because the mechanical linkage is intact, but you will lose electric power assist, so expect heavy steering at low speed and avoid high-speed maneuvers until repaired. If the steering assist cuts in and out unpredictably, park the vehicle and arrange diagnosis rather than continuing to drive.



## Tools that help

- OBD-II scan tool with full module communication and bidirectional capability
- Digital multimeter with min/max recording for voltage and resistance checks
- Battery load tester and charging system analyzer
- Wiring diagram and connector pinout for the PSCM circuit
- CAN bus breakout box or oscilloscope for network signal verification
- Trim removal tools and contact cleaner for connector inspection

## Reading U0131

|           |                                                                      |
|-----------|----------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>U</b>  | Network: communication between the vehicle's control modules.        |
| <b>0</b>  | Generic (SAE) code: it means the same thing on every OBD-II vehicle. |
| <b>1</b>  | Lost communication with a control module.                            |
| <b>31</b> | 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 · **U0132** Lost Communication With Ride Level Control Module · **U0140** Lost Communication With Instrument Panel Cluster

## See it working

Watch the animated explainer [Four-Stroke Engine Cutaway: Intake to Exhaust](#) on Auto Veteran to see the parts involved moving.

Full guide, related articles and animations: <https://www.autoveteran.tech/dtc-codes/u0131/>

