

GENERIC · NETWORK

U0438

OBD-II DIAGNOSTIC TROUBLE CODE (DTC)

U0438

Invalid Data Received from Park Brake Control Module

U0438 means the module that controls the parking brake sent data over the vehicle's communication network that other modules judged invalid or implausible. The fault is set by a receiving module when the park brake control module's messages are missing required information, out of range, or fail a checksum, so the problem lies in the data or the network rather than in the brake hardware itself.

SYSTEM	CODE TYPE	SEVERITY	FIX DIFFICULTY	AREA
Network	Generic (all makes)	Medium	Professional	Invalid data received from a module

Symptoms you may notice

- The parking brake warning light or brake system malfunction indicator stays illuminated on the dash.
- The electronic parking brake may fail to apply or release, or may apply with a noticeable delay.
- A message such as 'Parking Brake Fault' or 'Service Parking Brake' appears in the driver information display.
- The vehicle may refuse to shift out of park or may not enter park-hold mode automatically.
- Often no symptoms besides the warning light, with the parking brake still operating normally.
- Other unrelated warning lights may appear if the same network disturbance affects additional modules.

Common causes, most likely first

- 1 A weak or failing 12-volt battery that causes voltage dips during cranking or park brake operation.
- 2 Corroded, loose, or damaged wiring and connectors at the park brake control module or its network pins.
- 3 A park brake control module with internal faults that corrupt its outgoing data frames.
- 4 Network communication faults such as a shorted or open controller area network (CAN) bus wire affecting the module's messages.
- 5 A software or calibration issue in the park brake module or a receiving module that misinterprets valid data.
- 6 A failing park brake actuator or motor that draws excessive current and disturbs the module's power supply.
- 7 Poor grounds shared by the park brake module and other network components.



How to diagnose and fix it

- 1 Perform a full scan of all modules and record every stored code, then clear codes and test-drive to see whether U0438 returns immediately.
- 2 Test the battery and charging system, including a load test and a check for voltage drops during cranking and park brake operation.
- 3 Inspect the park brake control module connectors and the network wiring for corrosion, looseness, chafing, and water intrusion.
- 4 Check the module's power and ground circuits with a multimeter under load, looking for excessive resistance or intermittent opens.
- 5 Measure the CAN bus voltages and resistance at the diagnostic connector to confirm the network is healthy and not shorted.
- 6 If wiring and power are sound, check for technical service bulletins or software updates for the park brake module before condemning it.
- 7 Substitute a known-good park brake control module only after all electrical checks pass, then relearn and verify the repair.

What U0438 does not tell you

- U0438 is a data-validity code, so it does not prove the park brake module is defective; a voltage dip or a bad ground elsewhere can corrupt its messages.
- A weak battery is one of the most common causes, and replacing the park brake module before testing the battery wastes money and often leaves the code present.
- The code can be set by a receiving module rather than the park brake module itself, so the module reporting the fault is not always the one at fault.
- After a park brake module replacement or battery disconnect, some vehicles require a calibration or initialization procedure or the code will reset.
- Water intrusion into connectors or the module housing can cause intermittent invalid data that only appears in damp conditions.

Can I keep driving with U0438?

The vehicle is generally safe to drive if the parking brake still applies and releases, but avoid parking on steep inclines until the fault is repaired. If the parking brake will not release or the vehicle will not shift out of park, do not drive and have it inspected.



Tools that help

- OBD-II scan tool with full module scanning and live data capability
- Digital multimeter with min/max recording
- Battery load tester
- CAN bus breakout box or back-probe kit
- Wiring diagram for the park brake control module circuits

Reading U0438

- U** Network: communication between the vehicle's control modules.
- 0** Generic (SAE) code: it means the same thing on every OBD-II vehicle.
- 4** Invalid data received from a module.
- 38** The exact fault within that area.

Often seen with

U0100 Lost Communication With ECM/PCM A · **U0128** Lost Communication With Park Brake Control Module · **U0415** Invalid Data Received From Anti-Lock Brake System Control Mo · **U0437** Invalid Data Received From Differential Control Module - Rea

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/u0438/>

