

VOLKSWAGEN · POWERTRAIN

P1361

OBD-II DIAGNOSTIC TROUBLE CODE (DTC)

P1361 · Volkswagen

Cylinder 3 Ignition Circuit Open

P1361 on a Volkswagen means the engine control module (ECM) has detected an open circuit in the ignition coil circuit for cylinder 3, so it cannot confirm that the coil is being commanded or that current is flowing as expected. The ECM monitors the ignition coil primary circuit and flags this code when the electrical path is broken or the coil driver does not see the expected feedback.

SYSTEM

Powertrain

CODE TYPE

Volkswagen
specific

SEVERITY

Medium

FIX DIFFICULTY

Intermediate

AREA

Ignition system
and misfire

Symptoms you may notice

- Check engine light illuminated, often with no other noticeable symptoms
- Rough idle or misfire felt as a shake or stumble, especially at low speeds
- Noticeable loss of power or hesitation during acceleration
- Increased fuel consumption due to incomplete combustion in cylinder 3
- Possible flashing check engine light if the misfire is severe enough to damage the catalytic converter
- In some cases, the engine may enter limp mode or run with reduced performance

Common causes, most likely first

- 1 Faulty ignition coil for cylinder 3 (open primary or secondary winding)
- 2 Damaged or corroded electrical connector at the cylinder 3 ignition coil
- 3 Broken, chafed, or open wire in the ignition coil harness for cylinder 3
- 4 Poor ground connection for the ignition coil circuit
- 5 Faulty engine control module (ECM) driver for the cylinder 3 coil (rare)
- 6 Ignition coil relay or fuse issue affecting the coil power supply (if applicable to the model)



How to diagnose and fix it

- 1 Perform a visual inspection of the cylinder 3 ignition coil, connector, and wiring for obvious damage or corrosion
- 2 Swap the cylinder 3 ignition coil with another cylinder and see if the misfire or code follows the coil
- 3 Use a multimeter to check the resistance of the cylinder 3 ignition coil primary and secondary windings against factory specifications
- 4 Check for battery voltage and ground at the cylinder 3 coil connector with the key on and during cranking
- 5 Inspect the harness between the coil and ECM for continuity and shorts, repairing any damaged wires
- 6 If the coil and wiring test good, test the ECM driver signal with an oscilloscope or a noid light designed for ignition coils
- 7 Replace the faulty ignition coil or repair the wiring as needed, then clear the code and verify the repair with a test drive

What a P1361 Really Tells You

- An open circuit code does not always mean the coil is dead; a loose or corroded connector at the coil is a frequent culprit that is often overlooked.
- On many Volkswagen engines, the ignition coil harness runs near hot components and can chafe or melt, causing an open circuit that only appears when the engine is warm or vibrating.
- A failed spark plug or excessive plug gap can stress the ignition coil and eventually cause an open circuit in the coil winding, so always inspect the plug when replacing a coil.
- This code is specific to the ignition circuit, not the fuel injector or compression, so do not replace the injector or perform a compression test before verifying the coil circuit.
- After repairs, the ECM may need several drive cycles before the code clears from memory, so do not assume the repair failed if the light stays on immediately after clearing.

Can I keep driving with P1361?

You can drive the vehicle short distances to a repair shop, but avoid heavy acceleration or sustained high speeds because a persistent misfire can overheat and damage the catalytic converter. If the check engine light is flashing, stop driving and have the vehicle towed.

Tools that help

- OBD-II scan tool with live data capability
- Digital multimeter
- Ignition coil puller or socket set
- Oscilloscope (optional for advanced diagnosis)
- Wire repair kit with crimpers and heat shrink



Reading P1361

- P** Powertrain: engine, transmission and emissions.
- 1** Manufacturer-specific code (Volkswagen): its meaning depends on the make.
- 3** Ignition system and misfire.
- 61** The exact fault within that area.

Often seen with

P1364 Cylinder 4 Ignition Circuit Open · **P1362** Cylinder 3 Ignition Circuit Short To B+ · **P1362** TDC1 Sensor No Signal · **P1362** Ignition Coil C Secondary Circuit · **P1364** Ignition Coil Primary Circuit · **P1362** Ignition Coil Cylinder 2 No Activation · **P1364** Ignition Coil Cylinder 4 No Activation · **P1362** TDC1 Sensor No Signal · **P1362** IC Cylinder 2 Not Toggling After Enable · **P1364** IC Cylinder 4 Not Toggling After Enable · **P1362** Ignition Coil C Secondary Circuit Malfunction · **P1364** Ignition Coil Primary Circuit Fault · **P1362** IC Cylinder 2 Not Toggling After Enable · **P1364** IC Cylinder 4 Not Toggling After Enable · **P1362** Misfire During Start Cylinder 11 · **P1364** Misfire During Start Cylinder 12 · **P0300** Random/Multiple Cylinder Misfire Detected · **P0353** Ignition Coil C Primary/Secondary Circuit Malfunction · **P0303** Cylinder 3 Misfire Detected

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/volkswagen-p1361/>

