

VOLKSWAGEN · POWERTRAIN

P1608

OBD-II DIAGNOSTIC TROUBLE CODE (DTC)

P1608 · Volkswagen

Steering Angle Signal Error Message From Steering Angle Sensor

P1608 on a Volkswagen means the steering column control module has received an error message from the steering angle sensor (G85) over the vehicle's data bus, indicating the sensor's signal is missing, implausible, or internally faulty. The module sets this code when it cannot trust the steering angle reading needed for stability control, power steering assist, and headlamp aiming.

SYSTEM

Powertrain

CODE TYPE

Volkswagen specific

SEVERITY

Medium

FIX DIFFICULTY

Professional

AREA

Computer and output circuits

Symptoms you may notice

- The yellow power steering warning light or the electronic stability control (ESC) light stays illuminated on the dashboard.
- The steering feels heavier or assist fades intermittently, especially at low speeds.
- The ESC or traction control system may deactivate and show a message on the driver information display.
- The steering angle reading in live data stays fixed at zero or jumps erratically when the wheel is turned.
- Often no symptoms besides the warning light, with the car driving normally until stability control is needed.
- Adaptive headlights or lane-keeping assist may stop working because they rely on the steering angle signal.

Common causes, most likely first

- 1 A failing steering angle sensor (G85) inside the steering column, worn or contaminated by debris.
- 2 Damaged or chafed wiring between the steering angle sensor and the steering column control module, often from a previous airbag or column repair.
- 3 A loose or corroded connector at the steering column control module or the sensor itself.
- 4 Low or unstable battery voltage causing the sensor to drop offline during cranking or while driving.
- 5 A steering column control module that has lost its basic setting or has an internal fault.
- 6 Aftermarket steering wheel or column work that disturbed the sensor's calibration or clock spring alignment.



How to diagnose and fix it

- 1 Connect a Volkswagen-compatible scan tool and read all modules, then check live steering angle data while turning the wheel lock to lock.
- 2 Inspect the battery voltage and charging system, as low voltage is a common trigger for communication faults on the steering column bus.
- 3 Visually inspect the steering column wiring harness and connectors for chafing, corrosion, or loose pins, especially if the column has been serviced.
- 4 Perform the steering angle sensor basic setting or calibration procedure with a capable scan tool after clearing the code.
- 5 If the signal remains implausible, remove the steering wheel and clock spring to inspect the sensor for physical damage or contamination.
- 6 Replace the steering angle sensor or clock spring assembly if testing confirms an internal fault, then recalibrate and clear codes.
- 7 If the fault persists after sensor replacement, test the steering column control module and its power and ground circuits before condemning it.

What the steering angle sensor really needs

- A weak battery that still starts the car can set P1608 because the steering angle sensor briefly loses its reference voltage during cranking, so always load-test the battery before replacing parts.
- The steering angle sensor is often integrated into the clock spring assembly on Volkswagen models, so a faulty clock spring can mimic a sensor failure and set this code.
- After any alignment or steering column repair, the basic setting must be relearned with a scan tool or the code will return even with a perfectly good sensor.
- P1608 can be stored alongside ABS or ESC codes that point to the same sensor, so diagnose the steering angle signal first rather than chasing every module.
- A steering wheel that is not centered after alignment can push the sensor outside its learned range and trigger this code without any component failure.

Can I keep driving with P1608?

You can usually drive the car, but expect reduced or no stability control and possibly heavier steering, so avoid high-speed maneuvers and slippery roads until the fault is repaired. If the steering assist drops out completely, stop driving and have the vehicle towed.



Tools that help

- Volkswagen-compatible scan tool with basic setting and live data capability
- Digital multimeter for voltage and continuity checks
- Battery load tester
- Trim removal tools for steering column covers
- Torque wrench and steering wheel puller for sensor or clock spring replacement

Reading P1608

- P** Powertrain: engine, transmission and emissions.
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- 1** Manufacturer-specific code (Volkswagen): its meaning depends on the make.
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- 6** Computer and output circuits.
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- 08** The exact fault within that area.

Often seen with

P1609 Crash Shut Down Activated · **P1609** Powertrain Control Module ECM CPU Knock Sensor Circuit · **P1609** Internal Control Module CPU To CPU Communication Failure · **P1609** Loss Of TCS Serial Data · **P1609** Serial Communicating Link EML · **C0051** Front Left ABS Solenoid 1 Circuit Malfunction · **C0545** VIN Not Programmed or Incompatible - BSCM · **P0562** System Voltage Low · **U0126** Lost Communication With Steering Angle Sensor Module

See it working

Watch the animated explainer [How a CVT Works: Belt and Pulley Transmission](#) on Auto Veteran to see the parts involved moving.

Full guide, related articles and animations: <https://www.autoveteran.tech/dtc-codes/volkswagen-p1608/>

