

VOLKSWAGEN · POWERTRAIN

**P1611**

OBD-II DIAGNOSTIC TROUBLE CODE (DTC)

## P1611 · Volkswagen

### MIL Call-Up Circuit TCM Short To Ground

P1611 on Volkswagen vehicles indicates that the engine control module (ECM) has detected a short to ground in the circuit that it uses to request the transmission control module (TCM) to illuminate the malfunction indicator lamp (MIL). In plain terms, the wire that carries the MIL request signal from the TCM to the ECM is touching ground, so the ECM cannot reliably command the dashboard warning light.

SYSTEM

**Powertrain**

CODE TYPE

**Volkswagen  
specific**

SEVERITY

**Medium**

FIX DIFFICULTY

**Intermediate**

AREA

**Computer and  
output circuits**

### Symptoms you may notice

- The malfunction indicator lamp (MIL) may be illuminated constantly or may not illuminate at all when the ignition is switched on.  
Often no symptoms besides the warning light, because the fault lies in the communication circuit rather than in the transmission itself.
- The transmission may enter limp mode or exhibit harsh shifting if the short affects shared communication lines.
- In some cases, the engine may crank but not start if the short disrupts the ECM's ability to receive the MIL request signal.
- Other warning lights, such as the glow plug or EPC lamp, may also illuminate depending on the vehicle's configuration.

### Common causes, most likely first

- 1 A chafed or broken wire in the MIL call-up circuit between the TCM and ECM that is contacting the vehicle body or engine ground.
- 2 Corrosion or water intrusion in the connector at the TCM or ECM, causing the signal wire to short to ground.
- 3 A faulty TCM that internally shorts the MIL request output to ground.
- 4 A faulty ECM that misinterprets the MIL request signal or has an internal short on that input.
- 5 Damage to the wiring harness from rodents, heat, or previous repairs that pinched the signal wire against a ground point.
- 6 A poor ground connection for the TCM or ECM that causes the circuit to reference ground incorrectly.



## How to diagnose and fix it

- 1 Verify the fault is current by clearing the code and performing a road test; if P1611 returns immediately, proceed with circuit testing.
- 2 Inspect the TCM and ECM connectors for corrosion, water intrusion, or loose pins, and clean or repair as needed.
- 3 Disconnect the TCM and ECM, then use a multimeter to check the MIL call-up wire for continuity to ground; a reading near zero ohms indicates a short.
- 4 Visually trace the harness between the TCM and ECM, looking for chafed insulation, pinched wires, or damage from rodents or heat.
- 5 If the wire is shorted, repair the harness with solder and heat-shrink tubing, or replace the affected section.
- 6 If the circuit tests good, substitute a known-good TCM and recheck; if the code persists, substitute a known-good ECM.
- 7 After repair, clear codes and verify that the MIL operates correctly during the ignition self-test and that no codes return after a test drive.

## What the MIL Call-Up Circuit Really Does

- The MIL call-up circuit is a low-current signal line, so a short to ground can be caused by something as simple as a wire rubbing through its insulation against a metal bracket.
- A common misdiagnosis is to replace the TCM or ECM when the actual fault is a corroded connector pin that creates a high-resistance short to ground.
- On some Volkswagen models, the MIL call-up circuit is shared with other communication lines, so a short can also set codes in the transmission or ABS systems.
- A faulty ignition switch or relay can mimic a short to ground by dropping voltage on the circuit, so always check powers and grounds before condemning the TCM or ECM.
- After repairing a short, always perform a wiggle test on the harness while monitoring the circuit to ensure the fault does not reappear intermittently.

## Can I keep driving with P1611?

You can generally drive the vehicle with this code, but avoid long trips and be aware that the transmission may enter limp mode or the engine may not restart if the short worsens. Have the circuit inspected promptly to prevent a no-start condition.

## Tools that help

- Digital multimeter with continuity and resistance functions
- Wiring diagram for the specific Volkswagen model
- Trim removal tools to access harness routing
- Soldering iron and heat-shrink tubing for wire repair
- Scan tool capable of reading Volkswagen-specific codes



## Reading P1611

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

## Often seen with

**P1612** Engine Control Module Incorrect Coding · **P1610** Voltage Supply Missing Or Relay Module K40 · **P1612** IFI Control Module N37 Voltage Circuit 15 · **P1612** Throttle Offset Malfunction · **P1610** Loss Of PZM Serial Data · **P1612** Loss Of IPM Serial Data · **P0600** Serial Communication Link Malfunction · **P0700** Transmission Control System Malfunction · **U0100** Lost Communication With ECM/PCM A

## See it working

Watch the animated explainer [How a Helicopter Flies: Rotor and Tail in X-Ray](#) on Auto Veteran to see the parts involved moving.

Full guide, related articles and animations: <https://www.autoveteran.tech/dtc-codes/volkswagen-p1611/>

