



# HONDA CHECK ENGINE LIGHT CODE CHEAT SHEET

The check-engine codes Honda owners actually see — Accord, Civic, CR-V, Pilot, Odyssey. Print it, glove-box it.

FREE · V1.0  
2026

CODE	WHAT IT MEANS ON A HONDA	MOST LIKELY CULPRIT	SEVERITY
P0300	Random / multiple-cylinder misfire	Worn spark plugs or ignition coils	● CAUTION STOP if light is flashing
P0301–P0306	Misfire on one cylinder (last digit = cylinder #)	Bad coil or plug on that cylinder — swap the coil to confirm	● CAUTION STOP if light is flashing
P0011	Camshaft timing over-advanced (VTC, bank 1)	Stuck VTC oil-control valve; low or old oil — change oil first	● CAUTION fix soon if cold-start rattle
P0171	Engine running too lean (bank 1)	Vacuum / intake leak or a dirty MAF sensor	● CAUTION no towing — fix within days
P0420	Catalyst efficiency low (bank 1)	Lazy downstream O2 sensor — often not the converter itself	● DRIVE OK won't pass emissions
P0430	Catalyst efficiency low (bank 2 — V6 front bank)	Bank-2 O2 sensor or an aging converter on that bank	● DRIVE OK won't pass emissions
P0455	EVAP leak — large	Loose, missing or wrong gas cap (check it first — it's free)	● DRIVE OK won't pass emissions
P0456	EVAP leak — very small	Marginal gas-cap seal — smoke test if a new cap doesn't fix it	● DRIVE OK won't pass emissions
P0457	EVAP leak traced to the fuel cap	Loose or worn gas cap — the 60-second fix	● DRIVE OK won't pass emissions
P1457	EVAP leak — canister side (Honda-specific, not the cap)	Canister vent shut valve or bypass solenoid valve	● DRIVE OK won't pass emissions
P3400	VCM cylinder-deactivation fault (bank 1, V6)	Rocker-arm oil-pressure switch or VCM solenoid — check oil first	● DRIVE OK you lose the fuel savings
P0128	Engine never reaches full operating temp	Stuck-open thermostat	● DRIVE OK costs you fuel economy
P0505	Idle control system fault (rough / stalling idle)	Dirty throttle body or idle air control valve	● CAUTION sooner if it stalls

● **DRIVE OK** = no mechanical risk, fix within weeks (EVAP & catalyst codes still fail an emissions test) · ● **CAUTION** = short gentle trips only, diagnose within days · ● **STOP** = park it / tow it when the noted condition appears

## 🔥 FLASHING VS. STEADY LIGHT — RULE OF THUMB

### STEADY

A fault is stored but it is not an emergency. Drive gently, read the code with a \$20 OBD2 scanner, and plan the diagnosis within days — not months.

### FLASHING

**Active misfire under way.** Raw fuel is reaching the catalytic converter, which can overheat and be destroyed within minutes. Pull over and stop driving as soon as it is safe.

## ⚙️ HONDA DASHBOARD MESSAGES, DECODED

### Check Engine

The amber engine symbol — an emissions or engine fault is stored. Scan it; steady = plan a fix, flashing = stop.

### Check Emission Sys.

Honda's wording for an emissions-related CEL (O2 sensor, catalyst, EVAP or gas cap). Same urgency rules.

### VSA / triangle Δ

Vehicle Stability Assist (traction control) is off or faulted — often a wheel-speed or steering-angle sensor. Not an engine emergency.

### Wrench

Maintenance Minder service reminder (usually oil life), **not** a fault code.