

Tech Tips

■ Some 2003 Lincoln Towns Cars built before July 1, 2002 may turn on the battery warning lamp and store trouble code P1246 (generator load input failed) in the powertrain control module (PCM).

The problem typically surfaces when the vehicle is started, then placed into gear and immediately driven without letting the engine return to idle.

Trouble is, under those conditions the PCM won't command the alternator to charge, which causes illumination of the warning light and setting the code.

The only fix is to take the vehicle to a dealer to have the PCM reprogrammed with updated software.

For your information, the update can be found in WDS release B28.3 or higher.

Probably a 4G, Lester 8313.

(Submitted by Dan Poremba from information found at Tire Business, April 28, 2008.)

■ Q. When I start my Dodge Cummins on cold mornings, my headlights dim and then go back to bright. They do this for quite some time, and then they quit. I took my alternator in and was told it was OK. Both of my batteries also were fine. Fortunately, my headlights don't do this all the time. Got any ideas?

A. Your Cummins has a grate in the intake manifold that heats up for cold-weather starting. When the outside temperature is cold enough, a sensor tells the heater to heat, which makes for easier starting.

The “toaster” does not stay on all the time — it cycles. The “toaster” pulls a lot of amps, which will cause your lights to dim when it is on.

When it goes off, your lights brighten.

Then, when the engine warms up enough, it goes off for good. You have no problem.

(From “Ask the Mechanic” featured in the April '08 issue of The Progressive Farmer magazine. Submitted by Juan Grube, JIMCO, Inc.)

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