

Wheels: Bob (Frugal Fixer) of Beavercreek says, “I have a 1996 Chrysler Town and Country that is in the second gear protective mode. Before the problem came to the surface, the car exhibited the following symptoms: 1. The service engine light came on, 2. There were occasional problems with the speedometer/tachometer not functioning until the car was started again. Since the car has gone into the "safe mode," the engine light reset. I have continued to drive it for only short distances and at speeds that do not exceed the normal second gear limits. I normally do maintenance and repair jobs on my cars that do not require special mechanical and/or electronic tools. Thanks to the Internet, as well as several part supply houses, the problem is probably the vehicle speed sensor. I have researched the problem and found that the trouble could be coming from several other sources, but to be sure, the computer memory and codes should be checked. My question to you is: Do you feel that I should go ahead and replace this \$40.00 part and take the chance that most are guessing correctly, or take it to the shop with a minimum charge of at least \$100.00 in order to be sure?”

Halderman: While it would seem reasonable to assume that the vehicle speed (VS) sensor is at fault, your sources are correct that it can be caused by many other problems. Your signature indicates that you are a “frugal fixer” and this means that you do not like to spend money. However, by replacing parts that may or may not be the cause of your problem is, in my opinion, wasting your money by guessing. There is an old saying in the automobile business “Test – don’t guess.” I believe that paying a profession to diagnose the problem may be the best money you ever spent.

