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CAR DASHBOARD WARNING LIGHTS EXPLAINED

A practical guide to common dashboard warning lights. Symbols and meanings vary between makes and models, so always confirm the exact warning in your vehicle owner's manual.

UNDERSTANDING WARNING-LIGHT COLOURS

Red	Often indicates an urgent warning or condition requiring immediate attention.
Amber / Yellow	Usually indicates a fault or condition that should be checked soon.
Green / Blue	Commonly indicates that a system or function is operating.

COMMON DASHBOARD WARNINGS

Warning	What it may mean	Action
Check Engine Light	May indicate engine, fuel, ignition, emissions or sensor faults. A diagnostic scan may be needed to identify the cause.	Check soon
Oil Pressure Warning	May indicate inadequate engine oil pressure. Continuing to drive can cause serious engine damage.	Stop safely
Temperature Warning	May indicate engine overheating. Stop safely, allow the engine to cool and do not open a hot cooling system.	Stop safely
Battery / Charging Light	May indicate a charging-system fault involving the alternator, battery, wiring or related components.	Check promptly
Brake Warning Light	May relate to the parking brake, low brake-fluid level or another braking-system issue.	Check promptly
ABS Warning Light	Indicates a fault in the anti-lock braking system. Normal braking may remain available, but ABS operation may be affected.	Check soon
Airbag / SRS Warning	May indicate a fault in the supplemental restraint system. The system should be inspected.	Check soon
Tyre Pressure Warning	May indicate one or more underinflated tyres or a tyre-pressure monitoring system fault.	Check tyres
Traction / Stability Control	May flash when controlling wheel slip. If it stays on, the system may have a fault or may be switched off.	Check soon

WARNINGS THAT NEED PROMPT ATTENTION

Low Oil Pressure If the oil-pressure warning stays on while the engine is running, stop safely and switch off the engine. Have the cause investigated before continuing.	Engine Overheating Rising temperature, steam or a temperature warning can indicate overheating. Continuing to drive can cause major engine damage.
Brake System Warning If the brake warning remains on after the parking brake is released, or braking feels different, have the braking system inspected.	Charging System Failure A charging warning while driving may mean the battery is no longer being charged correctly and the vehicle could eventually stop.
Flashing Check Engine Light A flashing engine warning can indicate a more serious fault than a steady light. Reduce unnecessary driving and have the vehicle diagnosed promptly.	Multiple Warning Lights Several warnings appearing together can point to an electrical, charging or communication problem and should be diagnosed properly.

DIAGNOSTICS - DON'T JUST CLEAR THE LIGHT

A fault code helps identify which system detected a problem, but it does not always identify the failed part. Proper diagnosis can include reading codes, inspecting the related system, checking live data and wiring, testing components, and repairing the actual cause before clearing codes.

- ☐ Read diagnostic fault codes
- ☐ Inspect the related system
- ☐ Check live data and wiring where relevant
- ☐ Test components where necessary
- ☐ Identify the actual cause of the fault
- ☐ Repair the problem before clearing codes

VEHICLE / WARNING DETAILS

Vehicle make / model:		Registration:	
Warning light:		Date first noticed:	
Symptoms:		Mileage:	

NOTES / DIAGNOSTIC FINDINGS

Notes