**Universal Car Dash Warning Symbol Meanings**

When it comes to car dashboard warning symbols, it is important to understand that there are three main colours of the symbols. The colours include:

* Red
* Yellow/Amber
* Blue/Green

Red warning symbols tend to mean danger and indicates there is a serious issue that must be addressed. In this case the driver should pull over and wait for assistance. – Bad

Yellow/warning symbols tend to mean warning and indicates it is not a serious fault but still must be attended to as soon as possible. – Okay But Require Attention

Blue/Green symbols usually are not warning signs as they tend to indicate the cars instrument panel of the vehicles system. – No Warning / Less Urgent

**Red Warning Symbol Meanings**

The Most Serious Warning Symbols

**Oil Pressure Warning Light**

The oil warning light is one of the most serious warning lights. Oil pressure is generated by the oil pump keeping the engine oil circulating and by the quantity of oil in the engine. A leak, a faulty pump or too little (or even too much) oil can cause damage to the engine, a blocked oil filter can very likely result in huge repair bills or even a write-off. Your car engine needs the right level of oil pressure to stay lubricated, otherwise it will get damaged.

**Safe to drive?**

**No –** You need to stop and check your oil level. This light will appear when there is no oil pressure in the engine.

**Next Step**

It is best to stop as soon as possible and check the oil level, topping up as needed. It is good to check your car manual as it will tell you how much you require. If the light still shows it is best to seek assistance from a mechanic.

**Brake System Warning Light**

The brake system warning light requires urgent attention. It could be caused that you’ve left the handbrake slightly engaged while pulling away, so it’s best to ensure its fully released. If the light stays on, it is best to seek assistance. The problem could be that your vehicle could have a brake fluid leak, a sensor failure or need the brake pads replacing. It is best to get this checked out by your local mechanic.

**Safe to drive?**

**Yes –** Only if the brake fluid levels are ok, it could be a sensor fault. In this case it is safe to drive to a mechanics to get checked.

**No –** If you need to press your brake further than usual, if the pedal feels spongy when you press it, or sinks all the way to the floor this could indicate that your hydraulic brake circuits may have failed. It is best to pull over and request help.

**Next Step**

Check you've released the handbrake fully. If you have, stop, check the brake fluid level and top it up if you need to. Your owner's manual will tell you how.

**Battery charge Warning Light**

This warning light can indicate a number of issues, all relating to the cars battery and charging system. This is a particular problem at night because a faulty battery can lead to headlights failing, but without the battery or charging system providing electricity, you may find power steering, brake servos or the engine itself stop working. The cause of the warning light may be as simple as a faulty battery that’ll need replacing. But it could also be due to a problem with the car’s wiring or, more seriously, a fault with its alternator or drive belt. Other signs of a failing battery could be dim headlights or an engine that’s reluctant to start.

**Safe to drive?**

**No –** If the battery light is red while driving, it is best to have the fault looked at immediately as the battery may not be charging.

**Next Step**

In this case it would be best to stop the vehicle in a safe place, turn off the engine and contact roadside assistance or your local mechanic. It is advised not to restart the engine as it could make the problem worse.

**Temperature Warning Light**

If you see the light on at any time after start-up, then the engine is running too hot or there isn’t enough coolant (also called antifreeze) in the system. This may be due to a number of issues, all of which could leave you stranded in a cloud of steam. It could be that the car’s radiator is leaky, clogged or broken – you’ll likely see coolant dripping out if this is the case. It could also be due to a faulty water pump. More serious is a blown head gasket, which can signal catastrophic failure if you don’t turn off the engine immediately. White smoke from the exhaust could be a sign of head gasket failure. Some cars may also have another one of these lights but blue. This light means that your engine is cold, so it should appear when you are starting your car after it has been sat for a while. The blue light isn’t one to worry about but it’s advisable not to push your engine too hard until it has disappeared.

**Safe to drive?**

**Yes –** Only if the coolant levels are okay and the car is not running to hot.

**No –** In any case that the light turns red, it is best to stop the car immediately, as it is running too hot for too long and could lead to engine failure. If this continues it is best to get it seen by a mechanic.

**Next Step**

If the light stays on and stays red after the coolant being topped up, it is best to stop the car and get assistance from your mechanic as there could be something more serious going on like radiator is leaky, clogged or broken, faulty water pump or a blown head gasket.

**Seatbelt Warning Light**

The vast majority of cars today come with a system that lets you know if any passenger hasn’t got their seatbelt fastened. It will usually be a light with a sound to tell you this is the case. Cars use pressure sensors in the seats and in the belts, so if there is a certain weight on a seat and the seatbelt isn’t secured, it will notify the driver.

**Safe to drive?**

**No –** each passenger should have their seatbelts fastened before the driver takes off. It is the driver’s responsibility to ensure all passengers are wearing their seatbelt.

**Next Step**

Ensure all passengers have their seatbelts on before taking off. In the case that the light continues to stay one either if the belt is secured or if there is no one sitting in a seat, it could be a sensor issue and would require assistance from a mechanic.

**Door/boot/bonnet Warning Lights**

These lights don’t usually mean there is anything wrong with the car, unless of course there is a sensor issue. Instead, they inform the driver if you have any openings while driving. For example, you’re putting the weekly shop into the boot or securing your children in the back seats. But these lights also tell you if a door, boot, or bonnet hasn’t been shut properly and is only loosely closed, so they can be very useful.

**Safe to drive?**

**No –** If the boot, bonnet, or a door is opened or not closed correctly while driving it is best to pull over and close them properly. This is to ensure that everyone in the car is safe and that other road users are safe in case something leaves your boot while driving and causes and accident. It is always best to make sure all are securely closed before taking off.

**Next Step**

Make sure all are closed properly. You will know this once all lights and noises go off. In any case where the light or noise doesn’t could indicate an issue with a sensor. In that case seek assistance from a mechanic.

**Yellow and Amber Warning Symbol Meanings**

The Next Serious Warning Symbols

**Check Engine Light (Engine Management Light)**

If this warning symbol lights up, it is very important to get your car checked, even if it feels completely normal to drive. This light warns of a potential problem with the engine, which you would want to avoid damaging at all. There might me several reasons as to why this light has come on but it usual tends to be faulty sensor or a minor issue (ECU).

**Safe to drive?**

**Yes** – it is safe to drive if there is no loss of power with the car but should be checked as soon as possible.

**No** – if the light is flashing while you are driving. In this case it is best to stop the car in a safe place, stop the vehicle and restart the car after 2 minutes. If it continues to flash, it is best to call for assistance.

**Next Step**

Go to your local or nearest garage as soon as possible to figure out what caused the light to come on and to avoid damaging the catalytic converter or the diesel particulate filter.

**Low-fuel Warning Light**

This is a warning light that comes on when the amount of fuel in the tank has passed a certain level. It’ll usually come on when you’ve got around 50-70 miles of range and is designed to give enough warning so you can find a fuel station. Running out of petrol won’t cause any mechanical damage but stopping on the road due to running dry is an offence. If you run out of diesel, it’ll be necessary to bleed the air from the fuel lines and injectors before the engine will start properly. That means it’s more than simply topping up from a jerrycan.

**Safe to drive?**

**Yes –** It is safe to drive when this light comes on. It is best to get fuel before the cars levels drop very low in case you stop suddenly on the road.

**Next Step**

Go to the local fuel station and fill up your vehicle. But if you’re using more fuel that you’d expect, it could mean that you have a fuel leak (check the ground under your car - driveway), or your car’s on-board computer (ECU) is telling the engine to use more fuel than it needs. A mechanic will be able to check this for you.

**Tyre-pressure sensor Warning Light**

If your Tyre pressure monitoring systems (TPMS) is detected it will appear on your dashboard. It will only appear if your tyre pressure is low in your tyres. If not fixed low tyre pressure will adversely affect braking and cornering and as a sudden drop in pressure can cause a dangerous blow-out at high speed. If the TPMS system alerts you to low pressure, you’ll need to check and inflate the tyre. If it has an obvious puncture, you’ll need to change the wheel or use a puncture repair kit.

**Safe to drive?**

**Yes –** It is safe to drive with this light on, but it would be best to check your cars manual for the correct psi for your types, go to a local shop and pump them up. Most tyres usually take 32psi in each tyre.

**Next Step**

Check each tyres psi measure and pump where needed. If the light stays on it would be best to seek a mechanics help to ensure you don’t have any punctures in your tyres. Left untreated could affect the braking and cornering while driving, especially in wet weather.

**Traction-control Warning Light**

This is most commonly seen when the wheels lose grip, usually in the rain or snow. It gives a visual indication that you’re close to the limit of grip. If it’s on constantly, it usually means it’s deactivated – either by a fault or by you switching the system off.

**Safe to drive?**

**Yes –** It is safe to drive with this light as it will appear if you lose grip in bad conditions like rain or snow. In these cases, it is best to reduce speed and take it easy.

**Next Step**

If the light stays on that could indicate there is a fault in the system, or if you turned it off. If you turned it off it is best to turn it back on. If you did not turn if off, then it would be best to seek assistance from a mechanic.

**Anti-lock Braking System (ABS) Warning Light**

The ABS system helps to keep the car from skidding out of control during braking in slippery or extreme braking conditions by limiting your wheels from locking up.

**Safe to drive?**

**Yes –** It is safe to drive as long as there aren’t any noises coming from your wheels. When this light comes on, it is advised to take extra care when driving, especially in wet, icy, or snowy conditions as your cars braking distance will increase.

**Next Step**

If the light stays on when reducing speed, it is best to seek assistance from a mechanic in case there is a simple sensor fault which could need replacing.

**Windscreen (Wiper) Washer Fluid Level**

When this warning symbol appears, it is indicating that the windscreen washer fluid reservoir is nearly empty and needs a top up.

**Safe to drive?**

**Yes –** It is safe to drive with this light on as you need a top up your windscreen wash.

**Next Steps**

If you don’t own any windscreen wash, it is best to buy some, dilute with water (follow instructions for the water/fluid ratio) and top up into your windscreen washer tube under the bonnet. If the windscreen wash reservoir is filled and the light stays on, it could indicate there is an issue with the tube or a sensor. In this case it is best to seek assistance from a mechanic.

**Rear Fog Lamp Indicator Symbol**

This indicator also is only active when the lamps are actually on. The lines point to the right in this symbol, indicating a rear-facing beam. They are rare in North America but required in Europe. They make a vehicle more visible in poor weather to trailing drivers.

**Blue and Green Warning Symbol Meanings**

The Instrument Warning Symbols

**High or Low Beam on Indicators**

The light is active only when the high beams are active (turned on) and has been a standard in vehicles for decades. It is one of only a select few presented in a blue colour and features what is supposed to be the image of an old-style headlamp with lines coming out from it. Low Beam On indicator shows the lines pointing out from the headlamp pointing down.

**Automatic Headlight Dimmer**

The system is also known as the High Beam Assistant. The symbols indicates that the high beams are on and that the system will automatically (AUTO or A) switch between the low and high headlight beams on the automobile depending on whether or not sensors detect oncoming vehicle head lights in the distance.

**Hybrid and Electric Warning Symbol Meanings**

Hybrid and Electric cars will have different warning symbols compared to diesel and petrol cars. Some of these symbols include the follow:

**Ready to Drive Warning Light**

In comparison to a diesel or petrol car, a hybrid or electric vehicle will be silent when starting up. This light will indicate to you that the car is ready to be driven.

**Limited Power Warning Light**

This warning light contains a tortoise. This warning light means that your vehicle is running on limited power. There can be a number of faults that could be causing a lack of power to your vehicle so it would be best to stop the car and get it seen by your local mechanic.

**Battery Charge Level Warning Light**

This warning symbol will appear if your battery is at a critically low level of charge. It is best to seek the nearest available charging point as soon as possible encase the charge runs out.

**Pedestrian Alert System**

As hybrid and electric cars are quieter, especially at low speeds, it can be difficult for pedestrians or cyclists to hear them approaching. To prevent any accidents these vehicles are fitted with a system that emits a sound to alert other road users without using the horn. If the light stays on, regardless of the speed, this would then indicated there is a fault with the system. In this case it would be best to go to your local mechanic for assistance.