

## Ask the Mechanic

### Paul Kaganzi

SEND YOUR  
QUESTIONS TO

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A Q&A page where  
expert advice, tips

# Why does my car's clock keep resetting itself?

Hello Paul, my dashboard clock keeps resetting itself to 12:00 each time I hit a bump or speed hump. The rest of the electronics are fine. Could this be a weak fuse connection or just an Axela quirk I should live with? **Agnes**

**H**ello Agnes, the issue with your dashboard clock turning off when you hit speed bumps suggests a brief interruption in the constant power circuit. Most modern cars, including your Mazda Axela, have two power supply sources: one that is activated when the ignition is on and a constant battery feed. This setup helps maintain the memory of the microprocessor chips in certain electrical components, such as the car clock, which continue to function even when the ignition is off.

When your car clock turns off after

hitting a speed bump, it indicates that the constant power supply is being disrupted, leading to a loss of memory in the clock.

This problem is not unique to the Mazda Axela; it can occur in any modern car and does not classify as an "Axela quirk." Instead, it often signals a failure in an electrical circuit. Common causes of this issue include a loose fuse, loose wiring connectors, or internal component failure within the clock.

Fuses in electrical circuits can be

come loose if the metal tabs that secure them widen or break due to excessive vibration. Sometimes, these tabs may be damaged by corrosion, which prevents them from holding the fuses securely or conducting electricity properly.

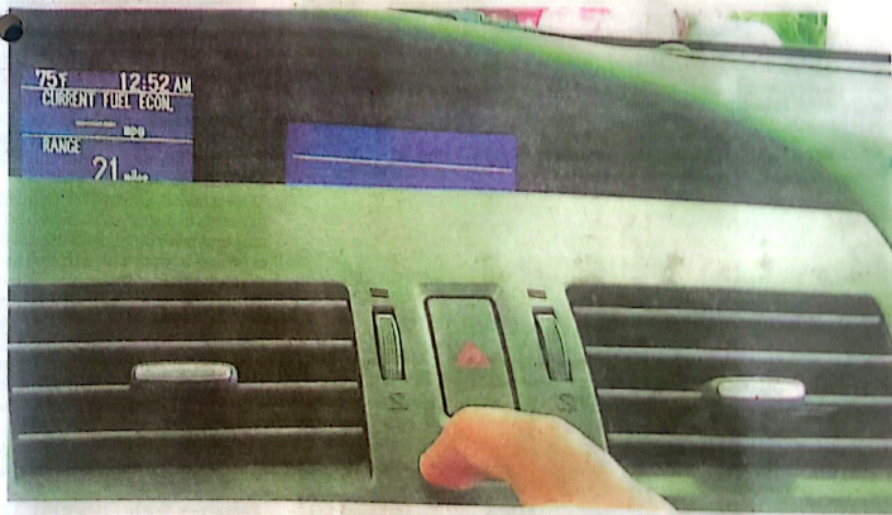
This scenario creates a break in the power circuit, causing the clock to switch off whenever the car encounters speed bumps. It is essential to inspect the fuse tabs to ensure they are clean and free from corrosion, as well as securely fastened.

Additionally, it is a good idea to periodically check the circuits and their connectors. Corrosion can build up over time, leading to intermittent circuit failures and loss of constant power to the clock memory, particularly when the car is jolted by bumps.

Furthermore, the clock module itself can develop issues that result in clock resets due to cracked solder joints (the crucial, conductive metal bonds connecting electronic components to circuit boards, ensuring both mechanical stability and electrical connectivity) on the circuit board.

These cracks can be caused by physical stress on the wiring harness pins, which may come loose when you hit speed bumps, momentarily cutting power to the clock. A car electrician can address this problem by re-soldering the joints or adding a supercapacitor (high-capacity, electrostatic energy storage devices bridging the gap between conventional capacitors and batteries) to stabilise the power supply to the clock.

**NOTE**  
TAKE THE  
CAR TO A CAR  
ELECTRICIAN



## Why is my Mazda overheating after repair?

Hello Paul, I recently replaced the water pump and head gasket on my Mazda CX-5 diesel. Why is there white smoke coming from my exhaust, and why is the car still overheating while losing power? **Jackson**

**H**ello Jackson, without knowing your car's repair history, it seems likely that your car experienced an overheating episode that may have damaged the engine's cylinder head gasket and possibly the aluminium cylinder head. This could explain why the water pump was replaced. White smoke coming from the exhaust is typically

caused by engine coolant entering the combustion system, which can occur due to a faulty cylinder head gasket or a damaged cylinder head surface.

A garage can easily verify this issue. Your mechanic should check for any signs of coolant intrusion into the ignition system and ensure that it is not flowing into the lubrication system.

This can be confirmed by inspecting for milky fluid in the coolant reservoir or

on the engine oil dipstick.

Additionally, conducting a compression test would be a wise step to determine if there is a loss of compression, which could be affecting engine performance. If necessary, dismantling the engine to assess the condition of the cylinder head and gasket will be your next step. This examination will help your mechanic estimate the extent of the required repairs.