



4WD or AWD Not Working — What It Usually Is

How real visits for a 4WD/AWD problem ended at independent shops across the US — the part actually replaced, how often, and what it cost when it was the only fix.

Module / actuator or transfer case

About a third of all these visits end in one of these two

Module / actuator **\$254 – \$696**

Transfer case **\$419 – \$1,671**

typical cost when it was the only fix
(parts + labor)

THE FIX INVOLVED	SHARE OF THESE VISITS*	TYPICAL COST†	MEDIAN
Module / actuator	23.1%	\$254 – \$696	\$413
Transfer case	17.3%	\$419 – \$1,671	\$740
CV axle / driveshaft	12.8%	\$211 – \$612	\$355
Wheel bearing / hub	12.5%	\$321 – \$623	\$445
Switch	10.2%	\$126 – \$344	\$216
Sensor	5.3%	\$180 – \$433	\$287
Cables / wiring	3.1%	\$121 – \$392	\$225
Fuse	2.7%	\$56 – \$239	\$115
Solenoid	2.6%	\$150 – \$446	\$282
Other, rarer causes	smaller shares — shift motors, encoders, vacuum hubs, fluid level	varies	—

*Share of visits whose repair involved this part; combined repairs count toward each part, so shares overlap and don't add to 100%.

†Middle half of real invoices when this was the only fix — parts + labor, all vehicle types.

WHICH ONE IS YOURS? LISTEN FIRST

- **Won't engage, no noises** — Silent refusal is usually electrical: the mode switch, a vacuum or electric actuator, or its wiring.
- **Grinding or binding when engaged** — Noise or hop in tight turns on dry pavement can be normal binding for part-time 4WD — or, with AWD, mismatched tire sizes quietly loading the system.
- **Service light with fluid history unknown** — Transfer cases and differentials have their own fluids on their own schedules.

WHAT TO EXPECT FROM THE SHOP

Expect a scan for four-wheel-drive codes and a check of the shift motor or actuator before anything expensive — the actuator and its wiring are the common answers. A transfer case is the expensive tail. Fluid service belongs on the same visit if it's overdue.

ABOUT THIS DATA · HOW TO USE THIS BRIEF

Vehicles **all makes and models, US fleet**

Data confidence **High** — *large sample, stable shares*

Records through **July 2026**, refreshed continuously

Source **paid invoices from independent US repair shops**

Take it to the shop. It tells you what the likely answers are and what each one should cost — so when the diagnosis comes back, you already know whether the number fits. Vehicle-specific price reports for the common fixes are on fixdozer.com.