



CD Changer Installs

(STOP!...Before You Begin, Think About This)

Document# 999301

Plan Your Mounting Location Carefully

What separates a professional installation vs. an installation performed by non professionals? Planning. In the simplest of terms, planning might be the single most important aspect of the installation of mobile electronic products, especially products such as CD Changers, amplifiers, and other larger products or components.

Why is planning so important before installing a CD changer in a vehicle? Here are some reasons that you probably never even thought about, and by the way, are typical mistakes non professional installers make.

Size of the main changer: A CD changers design is directly related to how many CD's the CD changer can hold, usually 6, 10, and 12 disc capacities depending upon the manufacturer. It seems logical that most people would always choose the larger disc capacities, but can the size of these larger CD changers fit or install where you think it will fit? Just as every CD changer is different in size, every vehicle is also designed differently. CD changers, because of their large sizes, typically only have a few places they can even be installed or mounted in a vehicle, but with some vehicles there are fewer possible mounting locations.

TIP: The Install Doctor recommends that the vehicle owner measure the dimensions of all possible CD Changers and then attempt to find possible mounting locations in the vehicle based on those dimensions.

Remote Controls: The remote control throws a surprising kink into the installation process. CD Changer remote controls were originally available as a wired remote control somewhere near the vehicles dash. On these wired remote controls were all the necessary functions to control the CD changer. Many newer CD changers are using wireless remote controls. These wireless remote controls actually use a 2 piece design: the wireless remote, and a wired sensor that must be mounted some where to the vehicles dash. Wired remote controls usually posed less installation concerns for the vehicles owner as the wireless remote control was designed to be moved around - the vehicles owner grabs the remote when they need to use it and then place it back in a holding spot somewhere in the dash. Wireless remote controls, on the other hand, create a problem for the vehicles owner. The sensor must be fixed or attached somewhere to the dash, typically by velcro or double sided tapes. Unlike wired remote controls which can be moved around, these fixed sensors typically stay in one place. The vehicle owner must decide upon a location for the sensor knowing that part of the vehicles dash will now have a permanent sensor attached to it. Some vehicles have pockets or trays directly below the radio where the sensor can be mounted, but doing this effectively prevents the use of the pocket for other uses. These fixed sensors must also be in clear view of the driver. The CD changers digital display is also located in the remote sensor. In order for the driver to see the digital display, the sensor must be located in clear sight of the driver. This also means that thieves can see the display as well. These fixed sensors are a tip off to potential thieves that a CD changer is located somewhere in the vehicle.

TIP: The Install Doctor recommends, based on each vehicles design, that the vehicles owner FIRST evaluate possible locations for a wireless remote sensor and/or a wireless remote control. Then the vehicle owner will be able to narrow down the choices of what type of CD changer to purchase.

Main changer mounting locations and mounting orientation: As previously mentioned, physical dimensions are a major factor in CD changer installations. Based upon the size of the CD changer, mounting locations can be determined within the vehicle. This is a commonly overlooked factor for vehicle owners seeking to purchase a CD changer. Most CD changers are purchased without considering the size of the CD changer and possible mounting locations based on the size and physical dimensions of the main hideaway CD changer unit. It is very important to understand exactly how CD changers can be mounted and how they cannot be mounted. Manufacturers design CD changers to be mounted in 2 different direction: Vertical, and Horizontal. Mounting brackets are included with the CD changer and based upon how they are attached to the CD changer determines whether the CD changer will be mounted vertically or horizontally. Here are some typical mounting locations for CD changers:

The trunk: (please see Installation Note 2 on the following page)

Attached to the floor of the trunk: depending upon access to the CD changer unit, mounting the CD changer to the floor of the trunk allows an installer to mount the CD changer in either the horizontal or the vertical directions.

Attached under the rear deck (under break light area) above the floor of the trunk: This is a recommended location for many reason. It places the CD changer near waist level with easy access to the CD changers removable cartridge without having to bend over. It also keeps objects stored in the trunk (luggage, sporting goods, shoes, boxes, etc.) from bumping into or forcing against the body of the CD changer. In this position, the only mounting orientation is horizontal.

Under a seat: most vehicles will not allow the mounting of a CD changer under a seat. Most passenger cars have low mounting seats with 2 or 3 inches of clearance. Usually only vehicles that allow the mounting of a CD changer under a seat are trucks or SUV's which have bench style seats. Typically these seats will be raised and many will not have the option of moving the seat forward or back. Even though trucks and SUV's have these type of seats, a vehicle owner must check under each seat to see if the vehicles on-board computer or other electronics devices are installed under the seat. On very rare occasions can CD changers be mounted under a seat inside the vehicle. For most vehicle owners, the trunk or rear hatch area is the only location available.

Rear hatch (sports cars and SUV's): These are good places to mount CD changers because they offer a large floor space and side walls the CD changer can be mounted to. Securing the CD changer to the floor means the CD changer can be mounted in a vertical or horizontal orientation. Using the floor does pose a similar problem as with mounting to the floor of trunks, objects in the hatch can bump or press and force into the CD changer. Side walls allow for a vertical mounting but require securing the brackets of the CD changer into the panels using screws. If the CD changer is ever removed, the screw holes would be visible.

Center consoles: on rare occasions when a center console is large enough and a CD changer is small enough, the CD changer can be mounted inside the center console. This is typically considered a custom installation and usually requires extra time and/or modification to the center console. The Install Doctor does NOT recommend this type of installation for do-it-yourselfers.

Installation Note 1: regardless of what location in a vehicle a CD changer (or any other accessory in a vehicle) is mounted, please pay strict attention to what lies beneath the location you are attaching and securing the CD changer. If you are mounting the CD changer to the floor of a trunk, look under the vehicle to see if the gas tank is below the metal frame. The screws used to secure the CD changer can puncture the gas tank and cause other serious problems. If you are mounting a CD changer inside the vehicles, pull up the carpet under the mounting location and see if any wires are located under the carpet. This is very common, and many installers have screwed into wires that are run below the carpet.

Installation Note 2: If you select to mount the CD changer to the floor of a trunk, think about this first. If you screw the CD changer to the floor of the trunk, you will also secure the carpet to the metal floor of the trunk. What about your spare tire? Many vehicles use a single piece of carpet to cover the entire floor of the trunk. If you secure the carpet by mounting the CD changer, are you going to have access to the spare tire when you need it. Again, The Install Doctor recommends mounting the CD changer under the break light or the rear deck in the trunk raising the CD changer off the floor of the trunk. If this option is not available and the only option is mounting the CD changer to the floor of the trunk, the installer can cut the carpet around the CD changer to allow the carpet to be lifted freely to gain access to the spare tire.

Other Problems To Think About

There are other problems as well to consider before purchasing and installing a CD changer. These are simpler and more common sense than the location and mounting related issues mentioned earlier, but again these are mistakes commonly made by non professional installers.

Is your vehicle already wired for a CD changer? Many auto makers are using radios that allow the auto makers brand CD changer to be installed by a dealership as an add on option when purchasing a vehicle. When a vehicle owner, either new car or vehicles previously purchased, want to add a CD changer, it may be faster and less expensive to add the auto makers CD changer instead of purchasing and installing an add on CD changer.

Access to the CD changers removable cartridge: Depending on where and how you install the CD changer determines the ease of access to the removable cartridge. Many people will leave the same group of CD's in the cartridge and seldom need to gain access to the cartridge, while others will replace CD's regularly and will need easy access to the cartridge. When selecting a mounting location for CD changer, take into consideration the ease of access to the removable cartridge.

Antenna adapters: Certain auto makers use specialty antenna plugs that plug into the factory radios original radio. Adding CD changers to these factory radio systems requires purchasing 2 antenna adapters in order to install a CD changer. (one antenna adapter converts standard plugs to the auto makers plugs, and one converts it back to the auto makers plug)

For additional information on similar topics, please consult the following technical documents:

- 999302** How To Correctly Choose A CD Changer (Your Vehicle May Actually Dictate Your Choice)
- 999303** CD Changers - Is Your Vehicle Factory Wired For One (They Get You Again)
- 999014** Antenna Adapter (One More Install Part You Might Have To Purchase)