



How To Correctly Choose A CD Changer

(Your Vehicle May Actually Dictate Your Choice)

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Choosing The Correct CD Changer

Without question the CD changer has possibly become the most popular addition to a vehicle. Sure, some people add new wheels and tires, maybe even a rear spoiler, but for the masses a CD changer has become the accessory of choice. In car single CD players, once only for those with enough disposable income to have one installed, have become standard accessories for new production vehicles. But a single in dash CD player just isn't enough any more. With the evolution of sport utility vehicles and family vans having a selection of music at hand has become a priority. But, what is really involved when looking for and purchasing a CD changer for your vehicle. Well, the last part of that sentence is the key: YOUR VEHICLE !

Why is your vehicle so important? Sure, any salesman can sell you a CD changer, but only a true and serious installer knows the problems with choosing the wrong CD changer. Here are some of the problems a vehicle owner needs to consider BEFORE purchasing a CD changer - only to have their local installer tell them after.

The Mounting Location

Where are you going to put it. Every vehicle is different. Do you have a pickup, do you have a trunk, a hatchback, a convertible, a car that vibrates alot? Now you might start to understand how the vehicle dictates your choice.

Simply, before you can choose a CD changer, you must have an idea of where you want to mount your CD changer inside the vehicle.

Every CD Changer Is Different In Physical Dimension

Wait. How can you make your decision where to mount the CD changer if you do not know how big the CD changer is. As of the print date of this article, there are 3 known CD changer configurations available: 6 disk, 10 disk, and 12 disc configurations. 6 discs are the shortest in overall height while 10 and 12 are obviously taller. This is a huge revelation to some people when you think that you can mount your new CD changer under the front seat of your vehicle. Every manufacturer of CD changers has their own configuration (6,10 or 12 disk) as well as their own physical sizes. The bottom line is that you have to factor together the size of the new CD changer to available locations inside your vehicle that can fit that size before making the decision on which CD changer to purchase.

Having Access To Changing Your CD's

What about access to the CD changer? Sure, everyone wants to have his or her new CD changer within easy reach while driving. But, the simple truth is that this is nearly impossible. Only a few vehicles have driver and passenger seats that have enough space under the seat to allow a CD changer to be mounted. This means that the majority of the vehicles will have CD changers mounted in the rear of the vehicle, either in the trunk, hatch, or possibly under a rear seating area.

The Remote Control / Display Box Decision

Wired or wireless remote control. Most vehicles will require that the new CD changer be a RF modulated style of connection. That is, the automakers factory radio does not have functions built into the radio to operate a CD changer that is added to the radio. (**TIP:** if your radio appears to have CD functions built into the radio you may want to first check with a local dealership to see what brand of CD changer the auto maker has chosen to use. You may be able to directly connect a CD changer to this radio.) Adding a CD changer to a radio without built in functions to operate a CD changer will require hooking the CD changer up the antenna of the new radio. 99% of CD changers installed into vehicles are done in this manner. So, how do you control the CD changer if there are no functions built into the radio. You will be required to operate the CD changer from a remote control - either a wired remote control with a display built into the remote, or a wireless remote control that must be aimed at, what else - a wired display box. Either way, a wired display box is required to operate the CD changer. Where are you going to mount the display? Again, the vehicle, as well as the individual styles of CD changers will determine your choice. You must weigh the style of the remote display box you want against where in the vehicle you are going to mount it. A good professional installer will show you possible mounting places (either with Velcro, adhesive, or permanent mount) in your vehicle.

What About The Cost Of Installation ?

Have you thought about installation costs? Did you know that some vehicles REQUIRE that the installer use parts to install the CD changer? It is common sense, but you will need to add the cost of the completed installation to the cost of CD changer when cost is a concern. Some vehicles use non-standard connectors at the ends of the vehicles antenna cable. CD changer manufacturers design their CD changers to work with industry standard antenna cable connectors. Many vehicles, such as General Motors (1989 and newer), certain years of Nissan, Volkswagen, and others use their own unique connector at the end of the antenna cable inside the vehicle. These unique connectors will not plug into the antenna cable connectors of the CD changer. You will have to purchase up to two (2) "antenna adapters" to convert these unique connectors over to the standard connector used on the CD changer. These costs will have to be added to the installation costs of the CD changer.

Purchasing and installing a CD Changer requires a little more thought than installing an indash style CD changer because of the variables that not only the CD changer poses, but the vehicle as well. Most consumers must consider what their exact needs are with a CD changer then how those needs fit their particular vehicle. Once those considerations are factored in, then particular models and brands can be looked at. Evaluate your vehicle, think about the mounting and installation, then choose the CD changer that best fits those parameters.

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

- 999301** CD Changer Installs (STOP! Before You Begin, Think About This)
- 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)