



Why Use Radio Installation Kits

(Why Do-It-Yourself Installs Look Amateur-Do It Like The Pros)

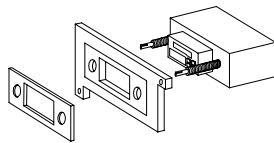
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What Is A Radio Installation Kit?

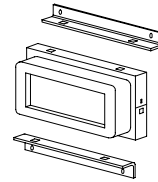
In the simplest explanation, the auto makers factory radio is different in size and/or shape than a new replacement radio. An installation kit, also called an indash stereo installation kit, allows a new replacement radio to be mounted into the opening where the auto makers factory radio was installed.

Installation kits play two important roles when installing a new replacement radio.

Convert size differences between radios: There are 2 basic body styles available for new replacement radio. The newest body style called a ‘DIN’ sized radio, is rectangular 2” high by 7” wide. This body style is found with indash CD players, detachable faces, pullout radios, and certain auto makers factory radios. The second body style is called a “shafted body” style. This body style was used with analog manual tuning radio many years ago. This body style is still available and has seen the introduction of digital electronics and tuning. Many auto makers factory radios are bigger than both of these radios. Because of this, when installing the new replacement radio the size difference between the larger auto makers factory radio must be accounted for. Radio indash installation kits are designed, specifically for that particular vehicles, to allow the smaller replacement radio to fit into the larger hole where the auto makers factory radio was originally installed.

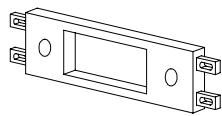


A Dodge/Chrysler/Plymouth kit being attached to a shafted radio to adapt the size difference.



A “multi” General Motors kit with a ‘DIN’ radio opening that is being mounted to brackets that were originally attached to the auto makers factory radio. This allows the kit to fit exactly into the dash just as the original factory radio

Provide mounting support and/or brackets: Another problem when installing a new replacement radio is how to attach and secure the new radio to the dash. When the auto makers factory radio is removed, most likely the mounting brackets and hardware that secured the factory radio will be permanently attached to the factory radio. Radio indash installation kits are designed with either the brackets already attached or with slots where an assortment of tabs included with the kit can be slid onto the kit that become the mounting brackets (The Install Doctor recommend kits with the mounting tabs or brackets already attached for security and stability). Once the new replacement radio is mounted to the radio installation kit, the whole assembly can then be installed into the dash and the kit can then be screwed into the dash to secure it in place.



A certain type of Ford kit designed with mounting brackets already molded to the installation kit allowing the installation kit to be screwed into the dash.

A Kit For Every Car

It is important to understand that there are HUNDREDS of radio installation kits and styles available. No vehicle is alike. Many auto makers may use the same radio style in the majority of their vehicles, but it is a good bet that none of the dashes are the same. When purchasing a new replacement radio, just remember that there will be many kits on the market for all types of vehicles. But, for your particular vehicle, there may only be one kit design specifically for that vehicle. Since certain auto makers, such as General Motors, use the same radio for most of their vehicles, a “multi” kit may be available which can be used for many of that particular auto makers vehicles. (one kit fits all philosophy) Most kit packages will list the vehicles that it will fit. Make sure your particular vehicle is listed. Also remember that auto makers change the body style of their vehicles every few years. Just because a kit will work on your vehicle several years earlier does NOT mean it will work on the year of your vehicle.

Kit Construction

Before purchasing a kit for your vehicle, educate yourself on the choices available to you.

Plastic: Most kits available are made of high impact, high strength, temperature resistant plastics. The Install recommends the use of plastic installation kits for many reasons. The primary reason is that kit manufacturers are able to design and mold kits to properly fit your vehicle. Today's kits usually allow you to choose between the large rectangular opening needed to mount a 'DIN' radio or the 3 openings needed to mount a shafted radio all on one kit. This flexibility makes plastic kits the choice of the pros; so when you purchase a kit, keep this in mind.

Metal: Many kits are still available in metal. Metal kits have many drawbacks that need to be addressed. The biggest drawback is the hole needed to mount the radio. If you buy a metal kit cut with 3 holes designed to mount a shafted radio, you will not be able to mount a 'DIN' radio (or you will have to cut it with tin snips - don't try it). Another problem with metal kits is that they are difficult to install many times. For whatever reason, they just won't fit as good as a custom designed plastic kit. Another problem is that a kit is almost always black. The metal used to make metal kits is, well silver colored. Metal kits are coated with a black coating that can easily scrape off when installing or mounting the new replacement radio.

Kits Designed For One Vehicle: This style of kit is the most popular for professional installers. Although install shops must stock hundreds of kits, kits custom designed to fit one particular vehicle have advantages over "multi" vehicle kits. In many instances, that particular vehicle style is so different than any other vehicle that a custom kit must be designed. Kit manufacturers who custom design kits for one particular vehicle assure that the replacement radio properly fits the vehicle and looks the best cosmetically. Sometimes "multi" vehicle kits are bland in appearance because they have to fit many vehicles. Making cosmetic changes may alter that "multi" kits ability to fit into another vehicle. The Install Doctor recommends kits custom designed for your particular vehicle if this option is available.

Multi Vehicle Kits: For many automobiles (General Motors and Dodge/Chrysler/Plymouth vehicles are excellent examples) "multi" vehicle radio installation kits are an excellent choice. Many General Motors vehicles use the exact same radio body style in many of their vehicles designs. Because of this, General Motors makes installation of radios at the factory modular simply by changing the brackets that mount the radio to the dash. Many times these brackets are simply bolted to the radio. For these radios, the brackets can be unbolted and bolted directly to the "multi" vehicle radio installation kit designed for General Motors vehicles. So for these vehicles, kits specifically designed for their vehicle are not necessary. Using the brackets attached to the original General Motors radio allows the kit to be mounted directly to the dash exactly as the original General Motors radio was. Other auto makers such as Dodge/Chrysler/Plymouth also use the same radio body style in most of their vehicles. For these vehicles, one kit usually fits all vehicles without changing the brackets. When purchasing a kit for these vehicles, there is a good chance that the kit you purchase will fit your vehicle.

For additional information on radio installation kits, please consult the following technical documents:

- 999007** Mounting Your New Replacement Radio To An Indash Installation Kit
- 999010** Radio Security (How To Stay One Step Ahead Of Thieves)

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

- 999008** Why Use An OEM Style Snap On Wire Harness When Installing Your New Radio
- 999003** Radio Install Basics (How Aftermarket Radios Integrate Into Electronics Of Vehicles)