

How do I?

An occasional series

This week: VHF mobile

Hopefully you and your HT have been out enjoying the summer and fall weather. Maybe you read other articles in this series and already have a mobile antenna on your vehicle. You might have been listening to other hams on local repeaters and are impressed with range they have. How do you join the ranks of VHF/UHF mobile with more than just a HT?

There are many mobile radios available from many manufacturers. Depending on your interests and preferences, Yaesu, Kenwood, Icom and Alinco all offer popular mobile rigs. They can be simple 2 meter transceivers or dual band VHF/UHF with D-STAR, System Fusion/C4FM or other digital protocols. Price can vary from a little over \$100 to more than \$400. Again, help yourself; if the radio does not come with programming software, pickup the excellent programmers and cables offered by RT Systems.

Installation: This can be tricky, especially in new vehicles. If you can sacrifice a cupholder (yikes!) a radio with a removable (remote) control head will allow you to put the controls up front while the radio itself can go under a seat or in the trunk.

Power: the most recommended approach is to run a power cable from the battery through a grommet in the firewall to the radio. Personally I do not like working on cars. I know professionals have some neat tricks and tools I don't have. In my Chevrolet Blazer I had the power cable run from the battery. For my Ford Escape I planned to do it the same way, but the installer was a professional and well worth the forty-five dollars. He found an always-on terminal in the fuse block and wired it into that. Going on six years later, no problems.

Antennas: a simple magnet mount is probably the best overall compromise in terms of price, appearance, removability, coyness (don't always want to advertise you have toys inside) and performance. If you are willing to do a little more work, a trunk lip mount antenna will usually provide better performance. If you are willing to drill holes, a fender mounted antenna such as a Diamond MR770HNMO will do very well.



Diamond MR77



Diamond MR770HNMO

REMEMBER: DO NOT let the radio distract you! Distracted driving kills. The best way to be radio mobile is to let someone else drive! Or simply wait until you reach a parking lot or rest area.

Catch ya on the air!