

In my many years of experience in the mobile electronics field I have seen it all when it comes to DIY installations. Here are just a few examples and helpful tips on how to avoid them.

One of the most common mistakes made by the DIY is the cracked dash or door panels. When removing panels it's easy to under estimate the strength of clips. It is very important to use the proper tools and focus on tool placement. Panels should be removed by prying near the clips and the thicker areas of the panels. Older vehicles usually have very brittle panels do to many years of exposure to the sun so extra care should be taken.

You must also consider the type of clip or fastener. Do your research, service manuals or speaking with an experienced installer could save you from some headaches.

On many occasions I have had customers tell me they had spent a great deal of time trying to pry the door panel off of later model GM trucks only to have it come off with a crack. This cracking sound that the customer is hearing is the L shaped bracket that holds the panel onto the door skin. It's a real disappointment when they learn that all they had to do was to lift up and out to remove the panel.

Another popular DIY mistake is running amplifier power cables through door jams. The majority of these installs also lacked a fuse near the battery. Just imagine the outcome of a pinched 4awg wire connected directly to the battery with no inline fuse.

Power wires should be run though the fire wall at a rubber grommet. If your vehicle lacks a rubber grommet you may have to drill a hole in the firewall. Take note of the location before you drill to avoid costly damage to brake or clutch components, as well as wire harnesses. Be sure to run power cables away from moving parts such as steering components and clear of anything that may melt the cables insulation like exhaust manifolds. Cables should be held in place with ties.

I remember shortly after I bought my business a customer drove up to my store in a fairly new vehicle and proceeded to climb out his window. After he looked around and asked some questions about stereo equipment my installer asked the customer if he would like us to fix his door so he would not have to climb in and out his window. The guy responded that his door worked fine but he couldn't open his door because his friend ran the power cable from the edge of the hood, over the mirror and doors to the trunk. Why do you ask? Because he didn't like the idea of the wire in the door jam. After a good laugh we explained to the customer that if his friend took a minute to look beneath the dash there would be a rubber grommet staring him in the face.