

FOUR WHEELER

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Untangling the Nest: sPOD Makes Wiring Accessories Orderly and Easy

Remember the good ol' days of splicing powered accessories such as off-road lights, stereos, CBs, and so on, directly into an ignition switch or cigarette lighter plug on your rig? Or, better yet, splicing them in without fuses? Sound familiar? Well, if you peeked under the dashboard of our '62 Willys Wagon back in the mid-'80s, you would have witnessed a tangled nest of wires, going every which way and all loose.

Fortunately for us wiring hacks, in 2005, Precision Designs developed a revolutionary power management system called the sPOD. The company's very first power distribution management system was designed for Jeep TJs. Since then, sPOD has kept up with the blistering pace of electronic CAN bus in the automotive industry. Even today, the folks at sPOD are still pushing the envelope, developing systems for trucks, autos, trailers, RVs, UTVs, boats, and much more.

After acquiring a '17 Toyota Tacoma 4x4 TRD Off-Road, our plan was to outfit it with a number of power-sucking devices, including multiple LED lights, a race radio, portable refrigerator, and a dual battery system. With this in mind, we went with sPOD's newest 8 Circuit Source SE System with HD Switch Panel. It's single-handedly the easiest and most convenient way to power onboard electrical accessories in a vehicle. We've used these products in the past, and will continue to use them in the future.

The sPOD is very user friendly, and includes three main components: the Source SE, HD Switch Panel, and all of the necessary hardware and mounting



accessories to complete the job. The Source SE is essentially the brain of the system. It mounts inside the engine compartment and is a fully programmable digital CAN bus-controlled system. It uses automotive-grade, high-power and high-temp components with a maximum 100-amp capacity. If you happen to run out of room with the eight circuits, you can daisy chain the Source SE up to 32 circuits with a simple plug-and-play option.

Next is the HD Switch Panel, which is encased in an aluminum billet-machined housing, powdercoated black, with marine-grade silicone encapsulated switches. We mounted the HD Switch Panel in a small 3x2-inch cubby, located to the left of the steering column. With the Universal Kit, you can also mount it anywhere in the cab, such as in the center console or in the upper ceiling pockets. The compact switch panel is about the size of a smartphone and has a built-in Bluetooth feature too, allowing you to control your powered accessories with your cell phone.

Also included are mounting brackets, battery cables, 10 feet of Ethernet cable, and a sheet of 72 reusable labels for the eight switch buttons. From start to finish, the entire installation took less than an hour to complete, thanks in part to the detailed instructions. Tag along to see the installation highlights of sPOD's newest Source SE with HD Switch Panel on our 4x4.



The Universal 8 Circuit Source SE System with HD Switch Panel includes all mounting bracketry and necessary hardware to install an sPOD into any truck, car, RV, UTV, boat, or in our case, a '17 Toyota Tacoma 4x4 TRD Off-Road. Fuses are a thing of the past with the Source SE system, and have been replaced with current-sensing MOSFET's controlled by a microprocessor.



The Source SE fits nicely on the top of the Taco's fuse box. A handy template helped line up the supplied mounting bracket.



With the Source SE bolted to the fuse box cover, it was conveniently located on the driver side of the truck, enabling it to be aligned to the firewall pass-through grommet and battery.



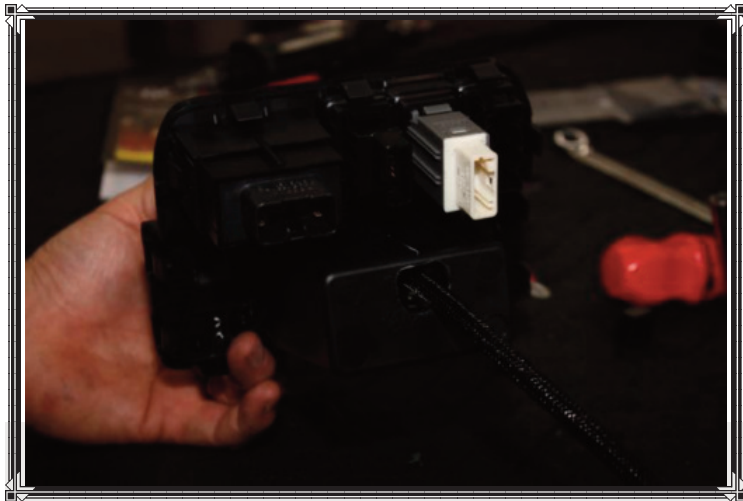
After sampling various locations to mount the HD Switch Panel in our Tacoma cab, we ended up mounting it to the open 3x2-inch cubby that sits to the left of the steering column.



A little customization was required with the sPOD Universal Kit, but we had a Dremel tool and a steady hand. Remember to measure twice and cut once. Here, we're opening up the two holes to accommodate the mounting plate.



Once the holes were opened up to accommodate the HD Switch Panel mounting plate, both bolts were tightened up.



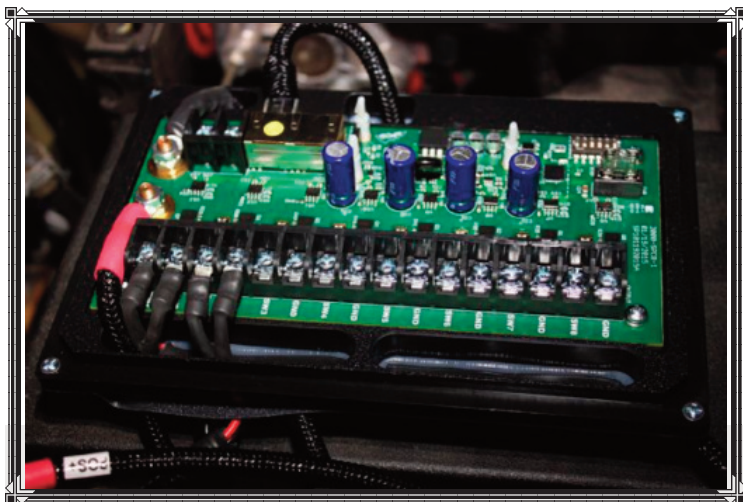
A 1-inch-square opening was cut into the back of the cubby to enable the Ethernet cable to slide through and connect to the HD Switch Panel.



The HD Switch Panel looks factory in this mounting position and is within easy reach to power up any electrical device, from LED lights to a portable fridge.



To connect the HD Switch Panel to the Source SE unit, a 10-foot-long Ethernet cable is included and runs through the firewall grommet on the driver side.



Once the positive and negative cables and Ethernet cable are connected, it's time to plug in a few accessories. The Source SE features eight circuits rated at 30 amps at 12.5 VDC per circuit, and are user-friendly terminally blocked for attaching accessories. The accessory wiring pushes through a rubber membrane to help keep the Source SE box free of dust.



The first things we wired to our Source SE with HD Switch Panel were Rigid Industries' 3-inch Dually cube LEDs and 28-inch E-Series LED lightbar, all actuated by the HD Switch Panel. There's an optional sPOD app for your smartphone too, which will enable you to turn off and on any accessory hooked up to your sPOD.

Sources

Duval Offroad Designs
805-375-7551
dodoffroad.net

Precision Designs
661-775-7799
4x4spod.com

Rigid Industries
Mesa, AZ 85215
855-760-5337
www.rigidindustries.com