

## Entertain Your Passengers While You Drive

(NAPSA)—Mobile entertainment systems are keeping both kids and adults happy on the road these days.

"A system that lets kids watch a movie or play a video game can make driving more relaxing," says Sue Elliott-Sink, director of content for *enjoythedrive.com*, the consumer Web site from SEMA, the Specialty Equipment Market Association. "Plus, entertainment systems can make road trips, camping trips and tailgate parties more fun."

It's easy to add an entertainment system to virtually any vehicle, from a small car to a huge SUV.

"And the prices can be quite reasonable," adds Elliott-Sink.

To help you choose the right entertainment system for your needs, *enjoythedrive.com* has a few questions for you to answer before you go shopping.

### 1. *A la carte* or complete?

Shopping for a mobile entertainment system is like buying a home stereo: You can buy an all-in-one complete package, or you can pick and choose components and put together your own system.

All-in-one options include overhead systems and console systems that replace (or add) a center console between front bucket seats.

All-in-one systems are the more economical choice—starting at about \$450—and many can be installed by do-it-yourselfers. *A la carte* systems can cost more, but they offer a much broader range of options.

### 2. What do you want to watch?

Entertainment systems can play one or several kinds of media, including videos, DVDs, TV and games. Which "input source" you choose is going to depend, in part, on whether you've got a collection of DVDs or videos at home, or a pretty substantial investment in a game system.

Most all-in-one center console systems include a built-in video or DVD player, and some overhead systems contain a DVD player. Other systems use a separate DVD, video or game player which can be mounted under a seat, in



**Stillen has turned this SUV into a rolling theater. Each monitor can display a different input, with the angled monitor on the dash providing navigation assistance.**

the trunk of a car, or in the cargo area of a wagon, van or SUV.

Another option is to integrate your audio and entertainment systems by selecting a stereo receiver that can play DVDs. This is particularly handy in small vehicles—and for parents of small children who can't change their own videos or DVDs en route.

### 3. Can everyone agree?

If your passengers can't agree whether to watch a movie or play a video game, get a system that lets them do both at the same time. Multichannel systems can play different inputs on different monitors, while providing sound through multichannel headphones.

### 4. What kind of monitor?

Like a computer, an entertainment system needs at least one monitor so you can see what's playing. These days, monitors range in size from about five to 20 inches. As with computers, smaller monitors are considerably less expensive than larger ones.

Some all-in-one systems include a TV-style monitor (or an actual TV), but most monitors are flat-panel LCDs. If you buy a monitor separately, you can choose from models designed to go in a headrest, on a dashboard or even in a sun visor. Another popular option is a flip-down monitor that mounts to the ceiling, usually between the front seats.

The best monitors offer a wide viewing angle, so passengers who aren't seated directly in front of the screen can still catch the action.

### 5. Where are the passengers sitting?

Most entertainment systems are designed for passengers in the second row of seats. If you have three rows in your vehicle, bear in mind that someone in the third row won't be able to see the screen on a center console—or in a front seat headrest. The options are to install a fairly large flip-down monitor, install a second flip-down screen for third-row passengers, or mount monitors in the back of the second-row seats.

If you only have one row of seating, you can add a custom system with a sun visor- or dash-mounted monitor—as long as it's installed so the driver can't watch while the vehicle is moving.

### 6. Do you want to listen in?

Because listening to Barney or video games while you're driving can be irritating, *enjoythedrive.com* considers headphones a key component of any entertainment system. Most systems include a jack to plug in headphones, but you may prefer a wireless headphone system (starting at \$150).

### 7. Do you drive multiple vehicles?

Portable entertainment systems can be moved from vehicle to vehicle—including rental cars. Most portable systems come in a backpack-style carrier that can be suspended from the front seat headrests, while another design can be buckled onto a bench seat.

Portable systems (which start at only \$300) draw power from a vehicle's cigarette lighter, and can also be plugged into a wall outlet for use at home or in a hotel.

For more information on entertainment systems for your vehicle, visit [www.enjoythedrive.com](http://www.enjoythedrive.com). The Web site includes links to dozens of companies that make and install audio, video and DVD systems, as well as information on a myriad of custom auto accessories. If you don't have Internet access, write to SEMA, Entertainment Systems, 1575 S. Valley Vista Dr., Diamond Bar, CA 91765-3914.