Setting up a Base Station CB

When setting up a base station (fixed location) CB, you have two basic choices of CBs:

1. **Base Station CB** – A base station CB is a table-top model with a built-in power supply.

   Advantages of a base station:
   - Has a built-in power supply. Just plug it into an outlet.
   - Usually feature-rich with a variety of knobs and switches.
   - Easy to access the controls.
   - Decent sized speaker for good audio.

   Disadvantages of a base station:
   - Costs more.
   - Difficult to find, and not many models to choose from.
   - Not portable.
   - Takes up a lot of space.

2. **Mobile CB** – You can take a CB that was designed for vehicles, and instead use it in your home.

   Advantages of a mobile CB:
   - Costs less.
   - Many models to choose from.
   - Can be transferred to a vehicle.

   Disadvantages of a mobile CB:
   - Must use an external power supply to power the radio.
   - Controls are close together.
   - Speaker usually fires downward, which does not provide the best audio. An external speaker can be used for better audio.

The main reasons to use a mobile CB in your home is because they cost less and you can buy them locally. If you really want a true base station CB, you will probably have to mail-order it and pay substantially more. In case you are wondering, Cobra no longer manufactures a base station CB. There is very little demand for base station CBs nowadays.

This document focuses on setting up a mobile CB in your home.

There are only two things you need in order to use a mobile CB in your home:

1) A power supply
2) An antenna

You might also consider purchasing an external speaker for better sound, but this is optional.

Power Supply

Mobile CBs run on 12 volts DC, which they get from your car battery. To use a mobile CB in your home, you need a power supply that provides 12 volts DC. Here are the specific requirements of a suitable power supply:

Voltage output: Between 12 to 14 volts DC
Current output: Minimum 4 amps for the 148GTL, minimum 3 amps for all other models

The 148GTL has a higher power requirement because it needs extra power for operation on single sideband.

A suitable power supply can be found at Radio Shack, etc.

Antenna

This is the difficult part about setting up a base station. Indoor antennas provide very poor range and are NOT recommended.

Mobile antennas (for use on a vehicle) are NOT recommended. Mobile antennas are designed to be used with a large metal structure (the body of a car). If you take away the metal structure, the antenna will not work properly.

The best antenna to use is a CB base station antenna. Base station antennas get excellent range, but they are big (typically 18 feet tall). They must be mounted similar to the way you would mount a TV antenna. Many people do not want to go to the trouble and expense of installing a true base station antenna. If you live in an apartment or condominium, it may not even be an option.

If you do go to the trouble to install a base station antenna, you will be very happy with the performance of your CB.

An alternative that may provide suitable performance is to use a “no-ground-plane” antenna. This type of mobile antenna is specially designed for fiberglass motor homes and boats. Fiberglass vehicles lack a metal body which is required for proper operation of traditional mobile antennas.

You might try using Radio Shack part number 21-977, which is a 4-foot no-ground-plane fiberglass antenna. No-ground-plane CB antennas can also be found at retailers that carry boating and RV supplies. Get one at least 3 feet tall. Try mounting the antenna to a gutter on your house.