

Dash Cam Installation Planning & Evidence Checklist

Choose the right camera layout. Decide how it should be powered. Send the correct photos for a useful quote. Preserve important footage after an incident.

1	PLAN	Select front, rear or cabin coverage based on the evidence you actually need.
2	POWER	Compare compatible hardwired and concealed USB/12V plug-in options.
3	UPLOAD	Use the photo checklist to request a more informed installation quotation.
4	PRESERVE	Follow a simple workflow so useful footage is not accidentally overwritten.

Free planning resource - no purchase required

Prepared by Auto Tools Mart, 438R Main Street, Suite 6, Reisterstown, Maryland. Information checked 5 September 2026.

STEP 1

Choose the coverage that matches your driving

More cameras are not automatically better. Start with the event you most need to document, then choose the smallest reliable system that covers it.

System	What it records	Best fit	Planning note
Front	Road ahead	Basic collision and road-event evidence	Usually the simplest installation and cable route.
Front + rear	Road ahead and behind	Rear impacts, tailgating and wider incident context	Rear cable route depends on body style and hatch movement.
Front + cabin	Road and vehicle interior	Rideshare, caregiver, fleet or shared-vehicle use	Audio and passenger privacy need deliberate settings.
Three channel	Front, rear and cabin	Maximum coverage for commercial or high-exposure driving	Higher storage and power demand; confirm compatibility.

Ask yourself before buying

- Do I need readable footage only in daylight, or also on poorly lit Maryland roads?
- Do I need evidence behind the vehicle or inside the cabin?
- Will the camera need parking-mode capability when the ignition is off?
- Does my vehicle have a hatch, powered liftgate, convertible roof or advanced driver-assistance sensors that affect placement and routing?
- Does the selected kit include the rear camera, correct cable lengths, memory card and compatible power accessory?

Useful quote rule

Send the exact camera brand and model, not only a marketplace link. Similar-looking models can use different connectors, cable lengths and power kits.

Memory-card planning

Estimate memory-card capacity and video retention time with the [Dash Cam Storage Calculator](#), provided by [DashcamCraft](#), a separate dash cam business and external planning resource.

STEP 2

Choose the power method with the installer

Auto Tools Mart can review compatible hardwired and concealed plug-in installations. The final method depends on the camera, vehicle, desired features and customer preference.

Option	Advantages	Limitations to discuss	Often considered when...
Hardwired	Concealed power; can support parking mode with a compatible kit and correct configuration.	Vehicle-specific fuse testing and safe cable routing are required. Battery protection settings matter.	The owner wants a permanent, tidy installation or parking-mode capability.
USB or 12V plug-in	Less invasive and sometimes easier to remove or transfer.	Outlet behaviour varies: some switch off with ignition, others remain powered. A visible plug may remain.	The customer prefers a removable setup or parking mode is not required.
OBD power accessory	May provide a concealed alternative on compatible cameras and vehicles.	Compatibility, operating mode and battery safeguards must be verified. The diagnostic port remains involved.	The camera maker provides an approved accessory and the customer prefers this route.

Parking-mode decision check

- Confirm that the camera itself supports the parking mode you expect.
- Use the camera maker's compatible hardwire or power accessory where required.
- Agree the low-voltage cut-off or battery-protection setting before completion.
- Understand that parking duration depends on vehicle battery condition, settings, camera load and driving pattern.
- Test normal shutdown, ignition-on recording and parking-mode behaviour before handover.

Important

Do not promise that every installation includes parking mode or a hardwire kit. These are capability and compatibility decisions, not universal inclusions.

STEP 3

Send these photos for a more useful quotation

Clear photos reduce guesswork. Do not remove trim, probe fuses or expose wiring merely to take a picture. Photograph only what is safely visible.

1	Vehicle identification	Year, make, model and trim. Include body style: sedan, SUV, pickup, hatchback, coupe or convertible.
2	Front windshield from the driver's seat	Show the mirror, sensor housing, upper windshield and the driver's normal field of view.
3	Windshield from outside	Show tint bands, inspection items, mirror housing and any existing accessories.
4	Rear installation area	For rear cameras, show the rear glass, hatch or trunk opening and existing wire boots if safely visible.
5	Complete camera kit	Lay out the camera, rear camera, cables, mounts, power lead and any hardwire or OBD accessory with labels visible.
6	Power preference	Select hardwired, USB/12V plug-in, compatible OBD accessory or 'please advise'. State whether parking mode is wanted.

Privacy before upload

Remove or cover registration cards, insurance documents, home addresses, licence plates or faces that are not needed for the quotation. Upload only files you are authorised to share.

Files to prepare

- JPG, JPEG, PNG, HEIC or PDF format
- Good light and sharp focus
- No unrelated personal documents
- A short note explaining anything unusual about the vehicle or camera kit

STEP 4

Installation-day and handover checklist

A tidy installation is only part of the job. Verify recording, camera view, power behaviour and file access before the appointment is closed.

Before installation ■ Remove valuables and clear access around the dashboard and rear area. ■ Bring all cameras, cables, mounts, memory card and power accessories. ■ State whether the vehicle is leased or has restrictions on modification. ■ Identify any known electrical, battery, USB or 12V outlet issue.	Before handover ■ Confirm front and rear views are level and not blocked. ■ Confirm date, time, time zone and video resolution settings. ■ Test ignition-on recording and the agreed power behaviour. ■ Confirm the card can be formatted and a test clip can be played. ■ Learn how to lock, download and preserve an important clip.
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A simple monthly reliability routine

Every month	What to check	Why it matters
Recording	Play a recent front and rear clip.	A powered screen does not prove that usable files are being saved.
Memory	Check for card warnings and follow the camera maker's formatting guidance.	Cards wear over time and recording errors can be silent.
View	Clean lenses and confirm mounts have not shifted.	Glare, dirt or a shifted camera can remove important detail.
Time	Verify date and time after battery or firmware changes.	Incorrect timestamps make footage harder to organise and explain.

STEP 5

Preserve footage after an incident

Loop recording can overwrite an important clip. Take calm, repeatable steps and preserve the original file before editing or sharing it.

1	Get safe first	Move only when safe and follow emergency or police instructions. Footage preservation is secondary to people and immediate hazards.
2	Protect the clip	Use the camera's event-lock function if you know how. Avoid unnecessary recording or repeated power cycling that could overwrite files.
3	Record basic facts	Note the date, approximate time, road or intersection, direction of travel and which camera view may contain the event.
4	Copy the original	Export the complete original video file. Do not trim, add captions, change the frame rate or overwrite the source file.
5	Create two backups	Keep copies in two separate locations, such as a computer and secure cloud storage. Confirm each copy opens and plays.
6	Preserve context	Keep the clips immediately before and after the main event when available. They may explain traffic, signals or movement.
7	Share a copy	Provide a copy to your insurer, lawyer or law enforcement when appropriate. Retain your original and avoid public posting before advice.

Insurance timing

The Maryland Insurance Administration advises contacting your insurer promptly after an accident and requesting the necessary forms, particularly for Personal Injury Protection claims. Follow your policy and professional advice.

Suggested file name

YYYY-MM-DD_time_road_direction_camera-original.ext

Example: 2026-09-05_1735_I695-west_front-original.mp4

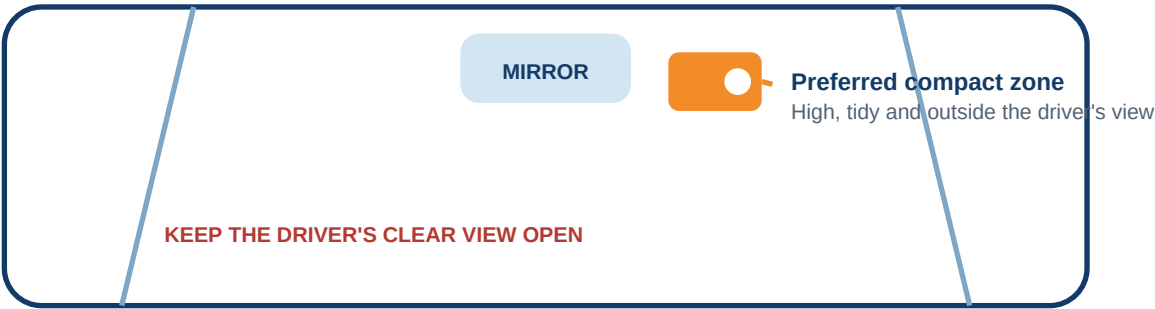
MARYLAND NOTES

Placement, visibility and audio deserve deliberate choices

This page is practical planning information, not legal advice. Laws and interpretations can change; consult a qualified Maryland lawyer for a specific situation.

Windshield placement

Maryland Transportation Article section 21-1104 prohibits objects or material positioned so that they interfere with the driver's clear view through the windshield. It also restricts nontransparent material on glass, subject to stated exceptions. A compact camera should be positioned and tested so it does not obstruct the driver's clear view or interfere with vehicle sensors.



Practical mounting principle

Mount high and compact where appropriate, commonly close to the mirror area, but verify the actual driver's view, wiper coverage, camera image and the vehicle maker's sensor zones. There is no universal position for every vehicle.

Cabin audio

Maryland Courts and Judicial Proceedings Article section 10-402 generally makes willful interception of oral communications unlawful and includes an exception where all parties have given prior consent. If a dash cam records voices inside the vehicle, disclose the recording and obtain appropriate consent, or disable audio when consent is uncertain. Rideshare, fleet and workplace use may require additional policies and advice.

Do not rely on the camera alone

A dash cam does not replace safe driving, required insurance, emergency reporting, witness information, photographs or professional legal and insurance advice.

TAKE ACTION

Request an installation review

Use the checklist below, then send your vehicle and camera details through the Auto Tools Mart quotation form. An attachment helps the installer review the likely scope, but a final quotation may still require clarification or inspection.

- Vehicle year, make, model, trim and body style
- Camera brand and exact model
- Front, rear, cabin or three-channel selection
- Parking mode: yes, no or unsure
- Power preference: hardwired, USB/12V, compatible OBD accessory or please advise
- Clear front-windshield and rear-area photographs
- Photo of all supplied camera parts and cables
- Maryland city or ZIP code and preferred appointment window



SCAN TO REQUEST A QUOTE

Upload your vehicle and dash cam photos

autotoolsmart.com/services/dash-cam-installation-services-maryland/
(443) 204-1972 | sales@autotoolsmart.com

Sources and review date

- Maryland General Assembly, Transportation Article section 21-1104:
<https://mgaleg.maryland.gov/mgawebsite/Laws/StatuteText?article=gtr§ion;=21-1104&enactments;=false>
- Maryland General Assembly, Courts and Judicial Proceedings Article section 10-402:
<https://mgaleg.maryland.gov/mgawebsite/Laws/StatuteText?article=gcj§ion;=10-402&enactments;=false>
- Maryland Insurance Administration, A Consumer Guide to Auto Insurance:
<https://insurance.maryland.gov/Consumer/Documents/publications/autoinsuranceguide.pdf>

Information and source links checked 5 September 2026. This guide provides general planning information and does not guarantee camera compatibility, recording quality, battery duration, legal admissibility, insurance outcomes or search ranking.