



INFRA RED CONTROLS

Adaptation Guide Number 6

An infra red unit is for the use of a disabled driver who has difficulty operating controls such as indicators and wipers while steering. The unit is often combined with a steering wheel spinner for people who can only use one hand to steer and operate the controls.

Steering wheel spinner



An infra red control is a small unit that locks into a bracket which is clamped onto the steering wheel, either on the left or right. The unit is fitted with a number of buttons or switches which, via a sensor system, operate individual secondary controls ie. indicators, lights, horn, windscreen wipers.



When one of the buttons is pressed a signal is sent to a control box, which is connected to the vehicle's electrical wiring and the appropriate function is activated. The sensor can be placed according to the vehicle, such as on the inside of the windscreen or the dashboard.

There are several different styles of infra red units with a varying number of buttons or switches for operating individual secondary controls. The unit pivots so that it remains in the upright position when the steering wheel is turned. This makes it easier to locate the control button/switch needed when the steering wheel is at any angle.

Points to Consider

- Check with the vehicle adaptation manufacturer whether your vehicle can be fitted with the infra red unit of your choice. It may not be compatible with the electronics system of some vehicles.
- Practice is needed to learn the position of each operational button/switch, so a person does not have to look down to press the correct one when driving.
- Finger dexterity is required and style and spacing of buttons or switches may be crucial in relation to hand size.
- Does the unit keypad illuminate when it is dark?
- Does the button/switch to operate the indicators automatically self cancel?
- Is the unit adjustable and can it be tilted or positioned according to personal preference?
- The unit is easily removable from the bracket, but secondary controls can be operated as standard even with the infra red connected.
- When another person is driving with the infra red unit removed, the bracket is obtrusive and may hinder the movement of threading the steering wheel through their hands when turning the steering wheel.
- Check that the wiring to the sensor is unobtrusive and that no loose wires are hanging.
- Check whether fitting an infra red control affects the function of the airbag of your vehicle. If using one hand on the steering wheel, you may be at some increased risk of injury during deployment of an airbag.
- Some modern cars have automatic headlights and windscreen wipers. Choosing these options means fewer adaptations are required.

- To determine if this adaptation is suitable for your particular needs, please contact the Forum of Mobility Centres to discuss an assessment on 0800 5593636, email: enquiries@mobility-centres.org.uk, website: www.mobility-centres.org.uk
- It is recommended that a person receives tuition using an infra red control before driving on the public highway. There is a Register of Driving Instructors for Disabled People and details of instructors in each county are available on 0800 5593636.

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