

But Officer ...

... when the local lawman asks you, "Do you know how fast you were going?" You can confidently answer, "Yes I do."



The Sky Drive is a compact and easily hidden piece of hardware that solves some major headaches for the hot rod owner.

For as long as hot rodders have stomped on the throttle the resulting readout on the speedometer is a hit or miss proposition. Not anymore. Classic Instruments offers their Sky Drive based on current GPS satellite technology. This offers rodders a foolproof answer to having both an accurate speedometer and odometer—without the hassle normally associated with installation and calibration.

For decades we hot rodders have dealt with the proposition of selecting the correct speedo gear; white, green, blue, red; how many teeth is that? All in the hopes of zeroing in on the correct one that would allow our speedo/odometer to read correctly—or at least get close. Next came the electric speedos. (CI doesn't offer anything for mechanical speedometers but maybe something in the future.) Very good but still there were speedo gears and the routing of the wiring. Good but oftentimes the resulting hassle of dealing with "dipswitches" was just too much for many a hot rodder.

Well, Classis Instruments (CI) has done it again. Long known for their quality instruments, custom gauge face program, and their restoration shop, the boys from CI have taken it one more step. Based on the latest GPS satellite technology the Sky Drive is a rodder's answer to a question asked long ago. Anyone of us with a smart phone should be familiar with GPS technology. There are aftermarket GPS units that perform a myriad of tasks but the Sky Drive isn't that kind of GPS. No, it will not tell you that you are so lost that even your wife has given you up! (We know this because we constantly have to send out rescue patrols to find Senior Tech Editor Ron Ceridono. This guy could have sunk the Titanic and the iceberg at the same time!)

Sky Drive is intended to give you accurate speed and odometer readings and it does so while taking out all of the guesswork and hassle normally associated with calibrating speedometers. The Sky Drive has an omni-directional antenna, which allows you virtually unlimited mounting

options, meaning it "sees" in a 360-degree format. It updates its location 10 times per second making it twice as fast as many of the aftermarket GPS units. It will also allow you to activate electric doors locks and a predetermined speed, or operate any solenoid at a speed you set such as a cruise control.

The ease of installation is second-to-none and can be used with nearly all electric speedometers in a matter of minutes. Being a sucker for electronic hardware I couldn't resist the opportunity to install one of these units on my roadster. Since I was in Phoenix about to join a leg of the AMSOIL/STREET RODDER Road Tour I enlisted the crew at Hot Rods by Dean for the install.

While I was out gathering doughnuts, Tony at Hot Rods by Dean began the changeover. When I got back he had the installation complete. (Now, for those of you that know me gathering doughnuts is a science, an art form, so to speak, and doesn't take me long.) To say this installation went quickly is an understatement. I had to ask Tony to take it apart so that I could get photos of the install.

There are five wires (red, black, white, green, and brown), two diode lights (red and green) on the unit, and an activation button recessed within a pinhole. The Sky Drive is a small Smartphone-sized device and can be mounted anywhere as long as it is hidden from the outside weather. We



Since I only needed the basic installation I used the white (speed signal output), red (constant battery power), and black (chassis ground).

located a number of locations behind the dash and beneath the cowl but opted for the backside of the dash. We slapped a piece of Velcro on the Sky Drive and we were set to go. (For the curious among us you can calibrate your speedo to read in kilometers or knots.)

In my roadster I have an electronic speedometer/odometer that requires a proper speed gear, electrical hook up at the trans, wiring that runs to the gauge, and, lastly and my nemesis, are the dipswitches at the speedo. (I truly dislike dipswitches 'cause my glasses aren't powerful enough for me to read the itsy bitsy numbers!) I have also seen many a rodder run into the problem where the speedo gear/hook up coming out of the transmission interferes with a crossmember. I have also seen lots of "fixes," such as hacked crossmember, elaborate connectors to route the cable/wiring around the crossmember, and then there's watching out that the speedo wire doesn't interfere with the exhaust or anything else located on the underside.



The disconnected wire you see (right) is the original speed hot wire. Note the white (sensor), red (ignition), and black (ground) are now installed.

A location such as on top of the trans computer mounted under the dash is a good location.



The Sky Drive works in this fashion:

1. The signal works off of satellites and not towers, making the signals "clean" with no "dead zones."
2. If power is taken away from the Sky Drive it will lose its signal. Once power is reapplied it will find its signal again and remember its calibration.
3. As long as the device finds a signal then that mounting location is ideal. It can be mounted anywhere except where it would be exposed to the weather.

I've had the opportunity to run up nearly 1,000 miles on my Sky Drive and the results are outstanding. You may notice that if you are in a tunnel the speedo will stop



There is a pinhole that houses the calibration switch. We used a very small Allen wrench but a ballpoint pen or a paperclip will work as well.



Hold down the pinhole mounted switch until your speedo registers 50 mph and hold it until the speedo needle goes back to "0."

functioning but once the device reaches "open air" it will pick up the signal. I have a master kill switch on my roadster and after going back several weeks later it took about four minutes while driving for the device to find the signal and all was restored.

The Sky Drive by Classic Instruments is a nifty way to eliminate many of the nuisance problems normally associated with hooking up and calibrating a speedometer/odometer. We did check the roadsters Sky Drive driven speedometer/odometer against other handheld GPS devices and found the Sky Drive to be accurate and because of its rapid refresh rate there was no lag time between indicated speed and actual speed.

If you are one of those rodders that really would like to know what your speed is and how far you have driven, the Sky Drive by Classic Instruments may be for you.

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The "red" light means you have power and are ready to begin the calibration.



The "green" light means your Sky Drive has picked up the satellite signal and your speed/odometer is ready to go.