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HANDS-ON | HOT LINE | COACH & POWERTRAIN

HANDS-ON | by OWEN MITCHELL

## PREVENTING BATTERY DRAIN

With the flip of a switch, Roadmaster's FuseMaster cuts off power while towing a dinghy vehicle

**Prepping a dinghy vehicle for towing behind a motorhome involves more than just installing a tow bar.**

In vehicles where the ignition key must be left in the ACC position for towing to unlock the steering wheel, the sound system (and the navigation system, if so equipped) will remain powered up. In that situation, the vehicle battery will be dead on arrival. The Honda CR-V is one such vehicle.

To prevent this, a 7.5-amp mini-fuse must be removed from the Honda fuse panel (No. 34) buried under the dash. Have fun reaching this fuse every time you hitch or unhitch. Roadmaster, which builds tow bars and related equipment, has an answer: FuseMaster.

The FuseMaster wiring harness is plugged into the fuse panel in place of the 7.5-amp fuse. At the end of the harness is an on/off switch. Midway in the harness is the original 7.5-amp fuse. Turn the switch on for driving, off for towing. No battery drain.

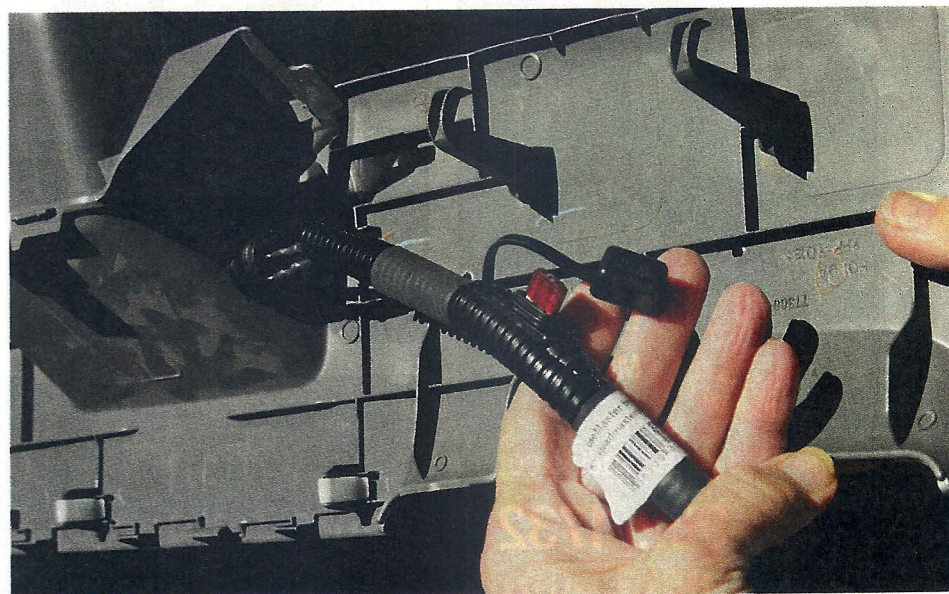
It's possible to build a harness such as this at a lower cost, with parts from auto supply stores including a fuse tap circuit, but FuseMaster eliminates the need for parts chasing and assembly.

Installation is do-it-yourself-friendly and requires only a 3/4-inch Forstner or paddle-style wood-boring drill bit (the Forstner bit produces a far cleaner hole), a fuse puller or a pair of needle-nose pliers, and, preferably, small hands to reach the fuse panel.

PHOTOS: OWEN MITCHELL



The Honda CR-V fuse No. 34 is the target for the FuseMaster.



Position the harness in the lower dash panel.

PREVENTING BATTERY DRAIN



Check clearance and drill a 3/4-inch hole in the lower dash panel coin pocket.



The FuseMaster switch, ready for the road.

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The first step is to remove the dash panel under the steering wheel. Give it a yank from a point under the steering column, and one of the attachment devices will pop free. Then pull on the panel at various points until others are free as well and the panel can be removed, providing better access to the fuse panel on the left. The targeted fuse is identified as No. 34.

But first, it's necessary to find a place for the on/off switch. A handy coin pocket in the lower dash panel works perfectly.

After taking care to ensure clearance behind the panel for the wires that will be connected to the switch, drill a hole in one side of the pocket with the 3/4-inch bit. Remove the nut from the switch, insert the harness through the hole and reinstall the nut.

Allow the panel to rest on the floor and loop-tie the harness to adjacent wiring to hold it in position while you insert the two harness connector pins into the vacated fuse panel slots. Small hands and flexibility are an advantage at this point. Insert the fuse into the harness.

Reattach the lower dash panel and you're ready for the road. Don't forget to turn the switch to the tow position when you're ready to go, or you know what you'll find: a dead battery.

The installation may take about 30 minutes for a technician who has done the job before, or an hour for the owner who's taking his or her time.

The FuseMaster for the Honda CR-V is priced at \$74.99 at Camping World. Similar harnesses are available for a number of other vehicles at varying prices.

Roadmaster, 800-669-9690,  
[www.roadmasterinc.com](http://www.roadmasterinc.com) ♦