



Looking back

Car reversing kits give you support, but don't rely on them entirely, says **Matthew Steen**

Over the past few years, we've all heard of tragedies where a car has accidentally reversed over a child. A car reversing kit includes a camera that you attach to the rear of the car, along with a monitor for viewing. When the reverse gear is selected the monitor powers up, showing the camera's view.

Our testing of car reversing kits found that, while they're helpful in reducing blind spots, you can't rely on them entirely. It's best to combine them with multiple ultrasonic proximity sensors and commonsense – before reversing, check

your rear view, keep an eye out over your shoulder and ensure your children or pets are out of the way.

One of the major downsides to all reversing cameras on test is the lack of viewing angle. When an obstruction was behind either rear wheel, we couldn't see it in any of the models, which is where proximity sensors would come in handy. On the flipside, a wide viewing angle of more than 140° side to side, tends to create a fish-eye effect that decreases the picture quality.

Some models on test can be used with multiple cameras, which is

Nutshell

- ▶ CHOICE wants to see reversing aids become standard in all new cars.
- ▶ Look for a camera with a wide viewing angle as you'll be more likely to spot obstructions.

particularly useful when towing a caravan or boat. With the addition of extra cameras, the monitor screen is split so you can see all the camera angles. The Elinz 7 Monitor HD has a large seven-inch monitor to better display the vision from multiple cameras. Of course, having extra cameras will add to the cost.

If you're comfortable around car electronics, you may be tempted to try installing these kits yourself, but the instructions can lack detail.

For full details on what to look for, go to choice.com.au/carreverse

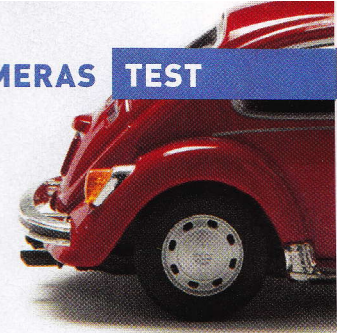
We strongly recommend having them professionally installed for the best possible result, even though this will add up to a couple of hundred dollars to the cost of the kit.

Most of the cameras are installed on the licence plate or bumper bar area, while the monitors can be mounted on the dash or windscreen, or clipped on the rear-view mirror. However, the Carkitco actually replaces the rear-view mirror, and is difficult to install. We'd heard of complaints about electronic interference with these kits, but after trying indicators, mobile phone calls, listening to the radio and using the window wipers, we didn't find any interference that compromised their use.

These are useful devices and, combined with multiple proximity sensors, are a safety addition CHOICE would like to see become standard in all new cars. For detailed information about other reversing aids, log on to choice.com.au/caraid. ■

HOW WE TEST

Our tester, Peter Horvath, tests the angle, visibility and picture quality of each model using a rig. Visibility is tested in bright daylight as well as in dimly lit situations. We also test for electronic interference from turning indicators, mobile phone calls, windscreen wipers and the in-car radio.



WHAT TO BUY

73%

Response QM-3796



\$199

Good points

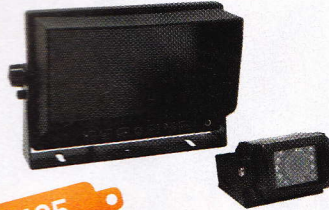
- Very good viewing angle and daylight visibility

Bad points

- Borderline visibility in dimly lit conditions and poor visibility in darkness
- Borderline picture quality

72%

Elinz 7 Monitor HD



\$195

Good points

- Excellent daylight visibility and good visibility in dimly lit conditions
- Excellent picture quality

Bad points

- Only OK viewing angle and visibility in darkness

72%

Polaris CM35 + Camera A



\$395

Good points

- Good viewing angle and picture quality
- Very good daylight visibility and good visibility in dimly lit conditions

Bad points

- Poor visibility in darkness

71%

Strike MO-116D



\$228

Good points

- Good viewing angle and picture quality
- Very good daylight visibility

Bad points

- Only borderline visibility in dimly lit conditions and poor visibility in darkness

	Price (\$)	PERFORMANCE			SPECIFICATIONS								
		Overall score (%)	Angle score (%)	Visibility score (%)	Picture quality score (%)	Type of screen	Wireless installation	Screen size (in)	Number of cameras that can be used	Location of camera	Location of monitor	Country of manufacture	Contact
Response QM-3796	199	73	89	63	50	Monitor	✓	3.5	1	L, B, W	Windscreen	China	jaycar.com.au
Elinz 7 Monitor HD	195	72	62	78	90	Monitor		7.0	3	L	Dashboard	China	elinz.com.au
Polaris CM35 + Camera A	395	72	74	69	70	Monitor		3.5	2	L	Dashboard	ns	polarisrearvision.com.au
Strike MO-116D	228	71	77	63	70	Monitor		3.5	3	L	Dashboard	ns	strike.com.au
Cellpak RGS-433P	274	68	81	53	60	Mirror		4.3	1	L, B	Mirror clip-on	ns	cellpak.com.au
Carkitco RVM43 + Minicam	384	67	75	53	70	Mirror		4.3	1	L, B	Mirror	ns	thecarkitcompany.com.au
Mongoose LCD43M/ MC304	488	67	70	53	80	Mirror		4.3	1	L, B	Mirror clip-on	ns	mongoose.com.au
Response QM-3806	299	66	66	63	70	Monitor	✓	3.5	4	B	Windscreen	China	jaycar.com.au
Gator ARV350WD	149	65	64	58	80	Monitor		3.5	1	L	Dashboard	China	aerpro.com.au
Rhino VSDS-RVM4.3	350	64	65	58	70	Mirror		4.3	1	L, B	Mirror clip-on	ns	rhino.com.au
Elinz 3.5 Wireless	145	63	64	63	60	Monitor	✓	3.5	1	L	Dashboard	China	elinz.com.au
Gator ARV36SYS	249	63	61	63	70	Monitor	✓	3.5	1	L	Windscreen	China	aerpro.com.au

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USING THE TABLE Scores The overall score is made up of angle (50%), visibility (30%) and picture quality (20%). **Price** Recommended or average retail, as of May 2012. **TABLE NOTES** ns Not stated. **L** Licence plate. **B** Bumper bar. **W** Rear window.