

The Uniden BC-RH96 Remote Head

I am probably no different from a lot of other scanner enthusiasts: I like to take my scanners with me in the car when I motor around town or on vacation. But I also have a better half who doesn't like me permanently mounting my base/mobile scanners on the dashboard and ruining the appearance of the family chariot.

I also don't want to be a safety hazard on the roadways because I am constantly looking down at the scanner to see what I am monitoring. So, for this reason I do not like mounting my scanners at any eye level lower than the bottom of the window.

Given all this, I was a happy camper when Uniden released their new BC-RH96 remote head, and it has proven to be a good logical solution to both of these issues.

The BC-RH96 is a nearly full-featured remote control head for the Uniden BCD996T and BCT15 base/mobile scanners, and the BCD396T and BR-330T handheld scanners. It controls all scanner functions including volume and squelch. The only exception is that the remote head will not support powering these scanners on or off.

It provides a large, easy to read LCD display with adjustable backlight and contrast controls for the orange-colored backlit display and keypad. For the two Uniden handheld scanners, this remote head can serve as a large LCD viewing screen.

It automatically recognizes the scanner interface baud rate for reliable communications between the various Uniden units mentioned above. It will also emulate your mobile scanner's Close Call and Alert LED signals if you have programmed the scanner to do these functions. All you need to add is a separate speaker for complete remote operation.

The remote head provides you with three shortcut keys that you assign to the operations you use most often. If you use your remote head with more than one scanner, Uniden includes two small laminated cards (printed on both sides) that graphically show the keyboards of each of the four scanners it operates and a place for you to record which commands you are using the three shortcuts for.

On the back of the remote head there is a jack the user can use for installing firmware updates (it faces downward). And there are also channels on the back of the head for routing the control and power cables.

❖ What's in the box?

In addition to the BC-RH96 remote head,



accessories in the box include a steel mounting bracket with attachment washers that are factory installed; mounting hardware (screws and washers) to attach the bracket; threaded knobs to allow mounting the remote head quickly to the bracket; remote connection cable between the scanner and remote head (10 feet in length); correctly polarized cigarette lighter adapter to let you connect the remote head to that outlet in your vehicle; owners manual; the two aforementioned pocket-size quick reference configuration cards; and a self-adhesive cable clamp.

The manual is well written and should be studied to get the most out of the BC-RH96 and understand all of its operations.

❖ Overall Rating and Final Thoughts

First, before you install this unit, I want to point out a safety issue you should consider. Avoid placing this unit in any airbag zones when mounting it in your vehicle.

I have seen some complaints on the Internet newsgroups about the lack of a speaker. Personally, I don't want the speaker built-in; I want to make my own choice of a speaker and where to place it in my vehicle for optimum sound reproduction.

Others have complained that the 10-foot scanner interface cable is too short in some installations. This shortfall can be easily overcome by purchasing an iPod extender cable with male and female mini plug connectors.

Another common complaint is there is only one color LCD screen. Yes, this is true, but at least it is a good color (orange) and not blue, like that used on the BCD-396T LCD screen and keyboard backlight.

Finally, there is the on/off power control issue. I understand why Uniden did not include this, since we are dealing with two different voltage levels, depending on which unit you connect the remote head to—6 volt handheld or 12 volt mobile.

I am sure overcoming some of the engineering associated with this issue would have added to the cost of this accessory. So, I recommend tying in the scanner to the ignition system so that starting the car or going to the accessory position turns on the scanner.

I also should point out that you will need two sources of 13.8 VDC if you use the remote head in your mobile with either the BCT-15 or the BCD996T scanner. One, of course, is for the scanner and the other one is for the remote head. If you use the remote head with any of the scanners in a base setup, you will need a 13.8 VDC power supply hooked up to the remote head in order to operate the unit.

Overall, this is a well-engineered unit and will be a welcome addition to your mobile or base monitor post if you own one of the new, compatible Uniden scanners.

The Uniden BC-RH96 (ACC 98) is available from Grove Enterprises (1-800-438-8155 or www.grove-enterprises.com) for \$199.95 plus shipping.

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