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Dakota Digital VHX-73C-PU-K-R

Dakota Digital VHX-73C-PU-K-R Analog Dash Gauges System User Manual

Model: VHX-73C-PU-K-R

1. Introduction

This manual provides comprehensive instructions for the installation, operation, and maintenance of your Dakota Digital VHX-73C-PU-K-R Analog Dash Gauges System. Designed for 1973-87 Chevy and GMC Pickup Trucks, this system offers modern instrumentation technology while integrating seamlessly with your vehicle's original dash bezel (bezel not included).
The VHX Series features fully lit needles, backlit faces, and highly visible LCD message centers, providing accurate and customizable display feedback. The system incorporates micro-controlled precision stepper motors and solid-state sensors for reliable performance.



Image 1.1: The Dakota Digital VHX-73C-PU-K-R Analog Dash Gauges System, featuring a speedometer, tachometer, and four auxiliary gauges, integrated into a black dashboard bezel. The bezel itself is not included with the gauge system.

2. Key Features

- **Included Displays:** Speedometer, Tachometer, Oil Pressure, Water Temperature, Voltmeter, Fuel Level.
- **Digital Message Center:** Displays Odometer, Trip Odometer, Resettable Service Odometer, Clock, Hour Meter, 0-60 MPH Timer, and more.
- **Integrated Indicators:** Supports Turn Signals, High Beam, Check Engine, Parking Brake, Cruise Control, and other vehicle status indicators.
- **Comprehensive Sensor Package:** Includes necessary sensors for oil pressure (1/8” NPT), water temperature (1/8" NPT with bushings for 1/4", 3/8", 1/2” NPT, 12mm, and 16mm for GM & LS applications), and a speedometer pulse generator.
- **Vehicle Compatibility:** Specifically designed for 1973-87 Chevy pickups and SUVs through 1991.
- **Illumination:** Features fully lit needles and backlit faces for clear visibility in all lighting conditions.
- **Customizable Display:** User-customizable display feedback for personalized monitoring.



Image 2.1: The Dakota Digital VHX-73C-PU-K-R gauge system with its red backlighting activated, showing the speedometer, tachometer, and auxiliary gauges clearly visible in low light conditions.

3. Package Contents

Upon opening your Dakota Digital VHX-73C-PU-K-R system, please verify that all components are present and undamaged. The package should contain:

- VHX Gauge Cluster Assembly (Speedometer, Tachometer, and four auxiliary gauges)
- Oil Pressure Sensor (1/8” NPT)
- Water Temperature Sensor (1/8" NPT with various bushings: 1/4", 3/8", 1/2” NPT, 12mm, 16mm)
- Speedometer Pulse Generator
- Wiring Harness
- Mounting Hardware
- Instruction Manual (this document)

Note: An original or reproduction dash bezel is required for installation and is **not included** with this package.



Image 3.1: The Dakota Digital VHX-73C-PU-K-R gauge system components, including the main gauge cluster and auxiliary gauges, mounted on a metal frame before installation into a vehicle's dashboard bezel.

4. Installation

Installation of the VHX-73C-PU-K-R system requires basic automotive electrical and mechanical knowledge. If you are not comfortable performing this installation, it is recommended to seek assistance from a qualified professional.

4.1. Pre-Installation Steps

1. **Disconnect Battery:** Always disconnect the vehicle's negative battery terminal before beginning any electrical work.
2. **Remove Existing Gauges:** Carefully remove the original dash bezel and instrument cluster from your vehicle. Refer to your vehicle's service manual for specific instructions.
3. **Inspect Bezel:** Ensure your original or reproduction dash bezel is clean and free of damage. The VHX system is designed to fit into this bezel.

4.2. Gauge Cluster Installation

1. **Mount Gauges:** Secure the VHX gauge cluster assembly into your dash bezel using the provided hardware. Ensure a snug fit.
2. **Connect Wiring Harness:** Connect the main wiring harness to the back of the VHX gauge cluster. Refer to the wiring diagram provided with your system for correct connections.
3. **Sensor Installation:**
    - **Oil Pressure Sensor:** Install the new oil pressure sensor into the engine block. Use thread sealant to prevent leaks.
    - **Water Temperature Sensor:** Replace the existing water temperature sensor with the supplied VHX sensor. Select the appropriate bushing for your engine's port size.
    - **Speedometer Pulse Generator:** Install the speedometer pulse generator according to your vehicle's transmission type. This typically replaces the mechanical speedometer cable.
4. **Power and Ground Connections:** Connect the main power, ignition, and ground wires from the VHX harness to the appropriate vehicle circuits. Ensure a solid ground connection.
5. **Indicator Connections:** Connect wires for turn signals, high beam, check engine, parking brake, and cruise control indicators as per the wiring diagram.

6. **Test Connections:** Before reassembling the dash, temporarily reconnect the battery and perform a preliminary test of the gauges and indicators.
7. **Reassemble Dash:** Once all connections are verified and functioning, carefully reassemble the dash bezel and secure it in place.

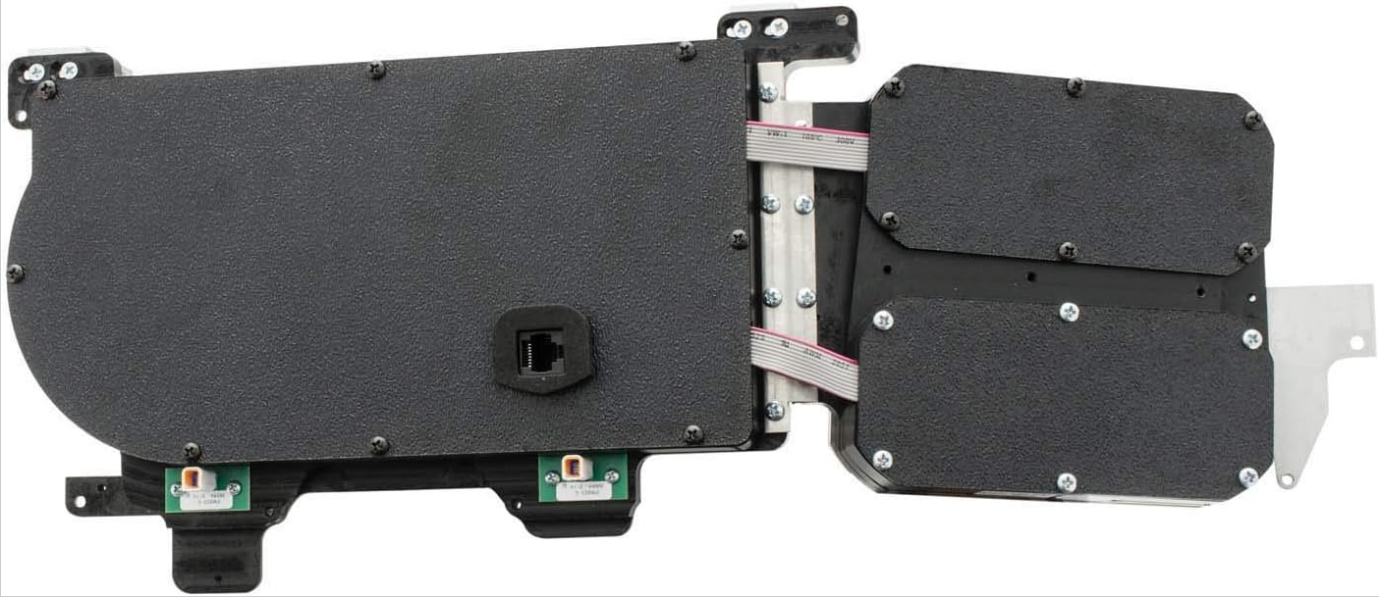


Image 4.1: The reverse side of the Dakota Digital VHX-73C-PU-K-R gauge system, illustrating the various connection points for the wiring harness and sensors, as well as the internal circuit board layout.

5. Operation

The Dakota Digital VHX system is designed for intuitive operation. Once installed and powered, the gauges will perform a self-calibration sequence.

5.1. Reading Analog Gauges

- **Speedometer:** Displays vehicle speed in MPH.
- **Tachometer:** Displays engine revolutions per minute (RPM).
- **Auxiliary Gauges:** Monitor Oil Pressure, Water Temperature, Voltmeter, and Fuel Level.

5.2. Digital Message Center

The integrated LCD message centers provide additional vehicle information. Use the control buttons (typically located on the gauge face or a remote switch) to cycle through the following displays:

- Odometer (total mileage)
- Trip Odometer (resettable trip mileage)
- Resettable Service Odometer
- Clock (time of day)
- Hour Meter (engine run time)
- 0-60 MPH Timer
- High Speed Recall
- High RPM Recall

Refer to the detailed programming guide included with your system for instructions on setting up and customizing the digital displays, including calibration of the speedometer and fuel gauge.



Image 5.1: A detailed view of the Dakota Digital VHX-73C-PU-K-R gauges, highlighting the speedometer and tachometer with their respective digital readouts for odometer and clock functions.

6. Maintenance

The Dakota Digital VHX system is designed for long-term reliability with minimal maintenance. Follow these guidelines to ensure optimal performance and longevity:

- **Cleaning:** Clean the gauge faces and display screens with a soft, damp cloth. Avoid abrasive cleaners or solvents, which can damage the surfaces.
- **Electrical Connections:** Periodically check all wiring connections for tightness and corrosion. Loose connections can lead to intermittent operation.
- **Sensor Integrity:** Ensure sensors are securely installed and free from damage or leaks.
- **Software Updates:** Dakota Digital may release firmware updates for enhanced features or performance. Consult the manufacturer's website for information on available updates and update procedures.

7. Troubleshooting

If you encounter issues with your VHX gauge system, review the following common troubleshooting steps before contacting support:

Problem	Possible Cause	Solution
Gauges not powering on	No power, poor ground, blown fuse	Check battery connections, verify ground wire, inspect vehicle fuses.
Inaccurate Speedometer reading	Incorrect speedometer calibration, faulty pulse generator	Recalibrate speedometer using the system's programming menu. Check pulse generator wiring and function.
Inaccurate Fuel Gauge reading	Incorrect fuel sender calibration, faulty fuel sender	Calibrate fuel gauge to match your vehicle's fuel sender type. Verify fuel sender operation.

Problem	Possible Cause	Solution
No reading from a specific gauge (e.g., Water Temp)	Faulty sensor, loose sensor connection, wiring issue	Check sensor wiring and connection. Test sensor functionality if possible.
Digital display is blank or flickering	Power fluctuation, loose connection	Ensure stable power supply. Check all harness connections.

For more detailed troubleshooting or issues not listed here, please refer to the full Dakota Digital VHX Series manual or contact Dakota Digital technical support.

8. Specifications

- **Model:** VHX-73C-PU-K-R
- **Compatibility:** 1973-87 Chevy/GMC Pickup Trucks and SUVs through 1991
- **Input Voltage:** 12 Volts DC
- **Material:** Metal (housing/frame)
- **Product Dimensions:** Approximately 24 x 14 x 6 inches (overall assembly)
- **Manufacturer:** Dakota Digital
- **UPC:** 670219117976





Image 8.1: A visual representation of the different color options available for Dakota Digital VHX gauges, showcasing various backlighting and faceplate styles. The VHX-73C-PU-K-R model specifically features black alloy styling with red backlighting.

9. Warranty and Support

The Dakota Digital VHX Series instrumentation systems are backed by an unrivaled **limited lifetime warranty**. This warranty covers defects in materials and workmanship under normal use.

For warranty claims, technical assistance, or further inquiries, please contact Dakota Digital directly. Their customer service team can provide detailed support for installation, operation, and troubleshooting.

Contact Information: Please refer to the official Dakota Digital website or the documentation included with your product for the most current contact details.

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