

Radar Roy

Radar - laser detectors and jammers blog



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## [Cobra XRS R9G Review](#)

Posted by Radar Roy

I was first introduced to the new Cobra XRS R9G at the 2007 Consumer Electronics Trade Show in January. The first thing that set me back was all the ooohs and aahs that installers were making about Cobra's new remote unit because of the ease of install.

I wasn't as impressed even with their new wireless controller, as I didn't feel that by mounting a radar detector to the top of the windshield would put it into the same classification as a remote mounted unit. However I decided to back off until I could actually purchase a retail unit to perform an install and to put the detector through its paces, I'm glad I did.

A few days prior to Speed Measurement Laboratories 2007 Radar Detector Shoot-Out, I took delivery of the new Cobra unit. I decided to do full install at SML in my Ford F-250 Pick Up and put it through its paces during the Shoot-Out.



I have to admit during and after the install I was very impressed with Cobra's ease of install. The package comes with lock strips that you attach to the windshield and to the main unit and GPS antenna. Also the unit comes with a lighter cord and a direct wire cord that you can use to attach to your fuse box.

I chose to install the main unit and the GPS antenna to the right side of my rear view mirror and then I ran the power cable down the side pillar to the fuse box. I then plugged in the wireless controller to the lighter to charge, and attached it to the air conditioning vent with the supplied clip. The total time of the install took approximately five minutes.



After the install, we decided to first put the GPS through its paces against the red light cameras in the El Paso area. The XRS R9G does come pre-loaded with a database of enforcement camera locations already programmed into the unit; however the newer El Paso cameras were not in its database. Therefore when we first approached these locations, we simply had to press a few buttons on the controller and the locations were stored.

We returned later during the test and the unit did alert us in advance of the approaching “marked locations”. However we noticed that the unit was not programmed to alert to these locations in “the same direction” only as the Cheetah and NavAlert GPS units. The “same direction” feature is nice when there are multiple enforcement cameras in the same area, as the unit will ONLY alert to cameras that you are approaching that are used in the direction that you’re approaching from.

We then spent some time testing the radar detector capabilities around the El Paso area. We had the Cobra XRS R9G along with Escort’s SR7 and Beltronics STi operating, all in highway mode. Normally it is not a good practice to operate multiple detectors at the same time as they can cause interference with each other. However our SR7 was a remote unit with the antenna mounted below the front bumper and the STi is designed not to leak any RF, so we felt that we took the proper precautions.

Traveling north on State Route 54 from El Paso, both our STi and the SR7 began alerting to a Ka signal at approximately the same time while the Cobra unit was completely silent. Approximately a half mile away, I noticed the light bar of an El Paso patrol car parked in the left shoulder, a hundred feet beyond a forty five degree turn.

The Cobra unit remained silent during this off axis encounter, until we were straight on with the patrol car and within line of sight. This encounter would certainly have earned us a costly citation if we had only relied upon the Cobra unit.

To see if we could increase the sensitivity of the Cobra unit we switched the unit into POP mode. After fifteen minutes of what seemed to be continues false alerts, we decided to then switch POP off and to keep the unit in Highway mode.

After the SML test, we decided to keep the Cobra unit in our pick-up for another few more weeks to compare the units overall performance.

After returning home, we ran the unit against Scottsdale's 101 freeway cameras and other local fixed photo radar and red light cameras in the area. As mentioned Cobra's unit does not allow for "same direction" notification and this feature is almost needed on Scottsdale's 101, as there are three cameras on each side of the freeway, for a total of six. During our trip down the 101, the Cobra alerted to all six, even to those on the opposite side.

As far as Cobra's preprogrammed database, we did find ourselves marking a number of fixed enforcement camera locations as they were not entered into their database. Prior to this review we went to Cobra's website to check on availability of updates, but no information was posted.

As noted in the El Paso encounter, we again found that the Cobra unit had a difficult time in alerting to off axis encounters on both K and Ka band, and lagged a few seconds behind the SR7 and the STi in all other real world encounters.

What disappointed me the most was the high percentage of false alerts and even alerting to the wrong band on several encounters.

The ratio of false alerts of the Cobra when compared to the SR7 and STi was almost 50 to 1. In many of these false alert encounters, we even shut off the STi and the SR7 to eliminate any doubt of these detectors interfering with the Cobra unit and while these units were powered off, we still encountered these same false alert signals.

In all encounters the Cobra would always indicate the correct band during its initial alert. However we noticed on numerous occasions that the display would then switch to other bands. One K band speed trailer in particular caused the Cobra to first alert to K, but then fluctuate between K, X and even Ka.

Cobra's suggested MSP is \$439.95, placing this detector in the same price category as the Escort 9500i, the STi and the Valentine One. However to compare the Cobra's performance to against these higher ended units I can only say this, Cobra has a long way to go.

I do admit that after installing and using the Cobra, I have appreciated their revolutionary idea using the mounting the detector in the method that they have chosen. However I did find myself a few times checking under my seats, under the dash and under the floor mats trying to find the remote control head that I misplaced.

I wouldn't find myself recommending this unit to any "road warrior" and if it is GPS and radar detection that you want, I feel that you have better options to choose from considering either the NavAlert or the GPS Mirror coupled with a good high end detector.

**Radar Roy's Rating - Three Badges** 