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[Escort 9500i Radar Detector](#)

Posted by Radar Roy

The Detector of the Future is Here!

In late December, visitors to industry leading RadarDetector.net were asked to describe their visions of what radar detectors would be like in the future.

Some of the most common responses from detector enthusiasts included:

- More sensitive Laser Sensor
- Easier programming
- GPS to detect False Alerts
- Frequency counter
- Auto mute
- USB dataport

All these points would make ideal improvements the majority of users would love to see. As fate would have it, almost at that moment, I received one of the first Escort 9500i radar detectors. After giving this new Escort a complete testing and evaluation, we were delighted to find it had all the “future” features people were asking for in our poll.

Escort’s new GPS powered Escort 9500i radar detector provides permanent relief from false alarms, including automatic door openers, motion sensors, and other radar based sensors. At the same time, it allows the user to program and/or download safety camera and speed trap locations directly into the unit.

The features of the Escort 9500i include:

- TrueLock feature that permanently eliminates false alerts by location and frequency
- Autosensitivity Mode provides real-time radar performance based on vehicle speed, plus Highway and City settings
- SpeedAlert feature provides an instant view of your vehicle speed during an alert
- Mark Location feature allows you to instantly “mark” known speed traps, cameras and other places of interest

- Voice announcements provide instant audible feedback for easier programming
- Auto Volume feature automatically increases the alert volume in noisy conditions such as a loud radio or road noise
- Easy to use Preferences allows you to customize up to nine features
- Ultra Bright Alphanumeric display with 280 LEDs
- Expert Meter tracks and displays up to eight radar signals simultaneously
- Spec Display provides actual numeric frequency for any radar signal
- Selectable radar and laser bands (on/off) allow you to customize which bands are being monitored (X band, K band, Ka band, Ku band, Laser, POP, SWS)
- Allows you to backup your Truelock data and other software related functions

Driving Impressions:

The first thing any seasoned radar detector owner wants to do is drive to all the local “false alert” hot spots in their neighborhood. That immediately reveals one of the weak spots for any detector.

My first stop was a local CVS Pharmacy that has a pair of automatic door openers at the entrance. As I approached the store, my Escort SR7 remote radar detector was at full alert in K band, but the new 9500i was completely silent. My first thought was of disappointment, thinking this particular 9500i was a bad unit.

But then I remembered the manual mentioning the 9500i’s autosensitivity mode. This lets the detector adjust its sensitivity (city/highway) based upon your speed. As I was creeping along at only 15 m.p.h., the detector lowered the sensitivity to city driving. I switched the detector from automode to highway, and the 9500i was at full alert. To program a false alert location, you press the mute button three times on either the detector or the smart cord. Pressing the button the first time mutes the audio of the detector. Press it a second time and the display reads “lockout?” Pressing it a third time makes the display indicate the location is “stored”.

Next stop was a Shell Mini Mart located a few miles away. Since a highway passed directly in front of this location, I figured I could test the autosensitivity mode at both highway speed and low speed.

I switched the detector back to automode and drove past the Shell station at 55 m.p.h. Both my SR7 and the 9500i alerted at approximately the same time on K band.

Making a U-Turn, I drove past the same location again, but at 25 m.p.h. Again my SR7 was at full alert and the 9500i was silent until I was directly across from the entryway.

I pressed the mute button on the 9500i and the detector went silent and the GPS location was stored.

I made one more pass by the Shell Station at 55 m.p.h. The 9500i remained silent, while the SR7 was at full alert.

With a Little Help from Police

Being a weekend evening, the local police department, sheriff's office and highway patrol were all involved in a D.U.I. traffic saturation patrol. That meant there was a lot of opportunity to test the range and sensitivity of the 9500i.

The range and sensitivity of the 9500i was stellar as it gave plenty of warning more than a mile away, even with the approach having a number of curves and hills.

At the last radar "fishing hole," I coaxed an officer friend of mine to park across the street from the Shell Gas Station. He parked in a car dealer's parking lot to run his Falcon K band hand held. My interest was to confirm that the 9500i would alert to another radar source at this location, after earlier marking the location as a false alert.

I approached the officer's location at normal highway speed. At over a mile away the 9500i began alerting to the officers K band radar gun and the signal strength graph increased as I approached. The 9500i was at full alert on the officer's radar gun as I passed, even though I had previously marked the spot as a false alert location.

The Paradise Valley Police Department in Arizona was the first agency in the nation to deploy automated traffic safety cameras back in 1987. Since then, other agencies in the area have seen the profitability of these devices and followed suit with installation of their own photo radar and red light enforcement camera programs.

The following afternoon, I headed to Scottsdale and the Phoenix area to mark off several of the safety camera locations and see how the 9500i alerted.

The City of Scottsdale installed a number of speed enforcement cameras on the 101 Loop that were operational for a nine month evaluation period. During this period, the City of Scottsdale projected their efforts generated an additional one million dollars in revenue. At this time, the cameras are still operational, however they are not issuing any citations until the evaluation is complete and the city council votes to maintain the program.

These speed enforcement cameras are also unique in that they do not use radar or laser to measure a vehicle's speed. Instead, they use sensors embedded in the pavement. This makes these cameras totally undetectable to all other radar and laser detectors.

As I approached each of the six camera locations on the 101 freeway, I pressed the mark button on the 9500i. At this point the 9500i displayed "Mark?". Press the mark button again and you're prompted to assign it a label as either being a Speed Trap, Camera or Other location. Then by pressing the mark button a third time, the GPS coordinates are stored in the 9500i's memory. Since these were all camera locations, I marked them off as camera locations.

After marking all the 101's camera locations, we went back to see how the 9500i alerted. Traveling at a speed of 55, the 9500i alerted with a voice prompt one mile away. Then the unit's display counted down the distance in feet until I reached the camera.

When I slowed down to a speed less than 50 mph in the approach to camera locations, the 9500i reduced its notification automatically to a half mile away.

Next we marked several school zones and other known high enforcement areas as "speed traps." Again, at each of these marked locations, the 9500i sensed our speed and adjusted the distance of the location accordingly.

Review of Other Features

AutoVolume Feature

One new and very cool addition to the 9500i is the AutoVolume feature that automatically increases the alert volume level when the ambient noise in the vehicle (or on motorcycle) is too loud because of music, wind noise or perhaps even a nagging back seat driver.

The AutoVolume feature was very handy when I did my test drive with the 9500i installed on my Harley Davidson Ultra Classic. In highway cruising the 9500i could easily be heard above the roar of my Scream Eagle exhaust and when I slowed down for city driving, the detector lowered the volume accordingly. I also was pleased to find that the 9500i interfaced with the HARD Escort system from Legal Speeding when giving radar and laser alerts. However, I was a bit disappointed to also discover that the HARD would not alert when the 9500i gave warning of marked speed trap or camera locations.

USB Port – Interface Software

Another Industry first is that the 9500i is the only radar detector that has a USB data port that will allow you to back up and store marked and true locked locations to your computer and to allow you to merge data with other users.

Audible Alert and Voice Prompts

The 9500i has both audible voice and tone alerts. The audible warning for radar or laser will start with a tone followed by a voice alert of the band. Meanwhile, the display indicates your vehicle's present speed. The detector display will then indicate the strength of the radar signal, and a few seconds later, automute. Each of the four radar bands (X, K, Ka, Ku and POP) and laser have their own distinct tone for easy identification.

SmartCord

The 9500i comes with the standard SmartCord found on Escort's current line of detectors. Pressing the mute button on either the detector or the SmartCord will allow you to mark false alert locations.

SpeedAlert

The SpeedAlert feature will display the vehicles speed on the 9500i during the first few seconds of the alert, as long as the vehicle is traveling above 15 m.p.h.

Brightness Adjustments – Backlit Buttons

The 9500i has five brightness settings starting at Full Dark to Auto. The Auto setting will set the brightness of the display according to the ambient light in the vehicle. The 9500i has backlit control buttons, making it easy for the user to adjust options during night driving.

ExpertMeter – SpecDisplay

Hard core radar detector users will also appreciate the ExpertMeter and SpecDisplay options. These allow users to track up to eight radar signals simultaneously or display the actual numeric frequency of the radar signal being displayed.

Interfaces with Escort ZR3

For those of us that need that extra laser jamming protection, you will be pleased to know that the 9500i also can interface with their ZR3 laser jammer, thus providing high end radar detection and laser jamming capabilities.

Recap of 9500i

Without question, the detector of the future has arrived with the new Escort 9500i. Our tests show this innovative unit sets a new standard for functionality, usability and upgradeability. **It has earned its place as my number one pick for 2007.**