

Review of Navig8r M35 with Intelligent Speed Assist

by Michael Paine 14 November 2008

<http://users.tpg.com.au/mpaine/roadsafe.html>

The Naviga8r M35 navigator unit from Laser now has SpeedAlert™ built-in and is available from several retailers. It comes with a 30 day trial of SpeedAlert, after which the subscription is \$9 per update. Users can perform an update as often as they wish but I would suggest twice a year.

Incredibly, the SpeedAlert speed limit database covers most cities, major towns and major highways of mainland Australia. The Australia wide coverage is listed at the SpeedAlert website:

<http://www.speedalert.com.au/>

This makes it the first Intelligent Speed Assist device in the world with a national speed limit database. It includes time-based warnings of school zones in Australia.

SpeedAlert operation

The navigator map continuously displays the current speed limit. It can also be run in SpeedAlert mode, with no map - see the rough snapshots attached. There are three levels of warning:

1. The circle changes to solid red if the speed limit is exceeded
2. The unit beeps if the speed limit is exceeded by 5km/h
3. The unit double beeps if the speed limit is exceeded by 10km/h. A voice announcement of the speed limit is also played.

Details about the navigator device are at:

<http://www.navig8r.com.au/MSeries.htm>

Where to buy

It can now be bought from Good Guys, Harvey Norman and Retravision.

The retail price is \$250. The SpeedAlert subscription is \$9 per database update (two updates per year recommended). For anyone intending to buy a navigator device the cost of the passive ISA function is negligible. *The technology and price have finally reached the stage where every novice driver should be using passive ISA.*



Criticisms

I am very pleased with the way SpeedAlert operates on the M35 unit. There are however a couple of irritating features with the actual M35:

1) It appears to use a separate system for speed camera, bus lane and red light camera alerts (i.e when within 250m *radius* of a point of interest). I realised this when it started to beep at me driving along the Sydney Western Distributor for all the city red light cameras underneath the freeway. Fortunately I found out you can disable the speed/red light camera audible alerts without disabling SpeedAlert audio. There is then no audible warning of these "hazards" but if you drive according to SpeedAlert you will not get booked anyway - and you will be a safer driver. The SpeedAlert PDA application also warns of these features but it is vector-based and so only alerts if you are approaching the feature along the appropriate road. Unfortunately this is not implemented on the M35 version.

2) The time setting seems to be haywire. The daylight saving function does not seem to work and if I set it to the correct time it seems to revert to non-daylight saving after detecting GPS. This means that the school zones did not work for me when driving and 8.15am (system clock reverted to 7.15). I have now set the time zone to GMT+11 to (I hope) stop this happening. Users need to be aware of this.

3) When powered by the car adapter it does not automatically switch off when the ignition is turned off (something I appreciated with the Garmin iQue). I have set the display to shutdown after 30s when on battery power but this does not seem to work when the USB cord is left plugged in.

4) An automatic night setting for display brightness does not seem to be available.



PDA version of SpeedAlert™ showing obscured 60K speed sign.

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