Radar and Laser Detection ●●●●○

The TPX 2.0 measures 1.9 inches high, 4.5 inches long, and 2.9 inches wide. It weighs 7.5 ounces.

The issue of radar detectors is controversial among motorcyclists. Currently, only Adaptiv Technologies makes a package specifically designed for our needs.

This weatherproof TPX 2.0 detects X, K, and Ka radar bands and police laser guns, and is easily mounted on the included quick-release base. The base is then secured to the motorcycle via common RAM or Techmount-type hardware. The detector features a sealed DIN connector for quick removal, and five huge, glove-friendly buttons to actuate controls.

The wiring harness features three additional connectors for motorcycle-friendly accessories, such as the included 3-LED Visual Alert warning light, a 3.5mm audio jack with available Bluetooth dongle for mono alerts to your comm setup or Adaptiv's optional wireless headset, and even a jack for an optional Blinder laser jammer (not tested here).

Ergonomically, this design is superior. The TPX's five large control buttons are spaced far apart, reducing the chances of accidental actuation while wearing gloves. The LCD display is located north of the button array and angled toward the rider, requiring only quick glances to read. The display and all buttons are backlit in a deep blue hue. The controls themselves are generally intuitive: A power button turns the unit on and off, though one can wire the TPX to switched power such that it turns on and off automatically with the ignition. Button backlighting can easily be turned on and off.

Volume control adjusts between five stages, and the same button can also toggle LED brightness between five stages, both shown as a bar graph on the LCD display. Finally, a city/highway button allows toggling between city mode (for residential and industrial areas where interference is common) and highway mode (for wide-open spaces with less interference). Within these city and highway main categories, using the same button, the detector can be programmed to ignore incoming X- or incoming X- and K-band alerts.

The Visual Alert 3/4-inch LED array fit easily on the R1200RT's dashboard.

Installation is straightforward, essentially involving finding a suitable place to mount the detector, and wiring up the harness. The manual calls for direct connection to the battery, but our advice is to power the TPX from a switched line to eliminate the possibility of parasitic draw running the battery down even when the detector is "off." Running from a switched line also adds the convenience of the TPX powering itself up and down in sync with the ignition switch.

Objectively testing radar detectors requires expensive, specialized equipment and, in many cases, the cooperation of local law enforcement, and neither was obtainable for the purposes of this article. Likewise, we were unable to locate any objective, scientific testing online conducted by independent third parties. As such, armed only with the Speed Measurement Labs Inc. certified TPX 2.0, I headed straight into the lion's den of strictly enforced speed limits—New Jersey's notorious Turnpike, Garden State Parkway, and Routes 1, 18, and 9.

Ignoring decades of ingrained instinct, I purposefully set out to find and exploit common local speed traps using real-time data in my Waze app. This was risky indeed, since New Jersey is infamous for being the most expensive state in the nation in terms of astronomical ticket fines, state surcharges, and court fees, coupled with the most speed traps per mile of any state. A speeding ticket here can approach or even exceed $1,000, if a lawyer is required to fight it. If the TPX 2.0 can keep a motorcyclist ticket-free here, it can succeed anywhere.

New Jersey State Troopers still use the ancient X-band (10.500-10.550 GHz) which has all but disappeared nationwide, and the TPX 2.0 gave fair warning well before the stealthy police cruisers came into view. Likewise, both the K-band (24.050-24.250 GHz) and Ka-band (33.400-36.000 GHz) warnings could save mortgage-sized fines to the state. In three months of riding, the Laser alert rarely activated, but when it did, the 5-0 appeared a few moments later, leaving plenty of time to scrub off sufficient velocity. The TPX 2.0 identified numerous places I could have easily received speeding tickets.

The audible and visual alerts were excellent. Since each band has its own distinct beep, within a few weeks of commuting I was able to memorize which sound corresponded to which band alert. This was useful in ignoring X-band alerts in town (almost always false alarms caused by garage door openers.) The TPX's integrated audio speaker is surprisingly loud when set to high. I was able to easily hear it despite the road noise at excessive speed, all while wearing noise-canceling ear plugs and a full face Arai. Likewise, the Visual Alert warning light (see photos) was invaluable in determining signal detection without taking my eyes off the road. Its quick flashes indicate a strong signal, while the slower flashes indicate a weak signal, all within the rider's primary line of sight.

The Adaptiv Technologies TPX 2.0 remains the only viable choice thus far for motorcycle-specific detectors. From an ergonomic perspective, nothing else on the market right now comes close to allowing riders such tactile, visual, and audible control on the fly. Likewise, during our testing regimen, it was routinely exposed to downpours, sitting in direct sun for many hours per day, and even an errant splash of gasoline from a faulty fuel nozzle. None of these environmental conditions affected the TPX, but they would have likely dispatched automotive-grade detectors very early on. For these reasons and for the protection it does offer motorcyclists against predatory revenue gathering by the state, we can recommend it. MSRP is $299.

—Moshe Levy

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