

Range Rover has a long list of safety features

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ates 325 lbs-ft of torque at 3,600 rpm. The five-speed ZF transmission provides fully automatic and/or CommandShift manual operation, even in Low range. The torque-sensing Torsen center differential continuously and automatically changes the torque bias between front and rear axles depending on available traction.

The new Range Rover also has a long list of active and passive safety features including eight standard airbags protecting both front and rear passengers in frontal and side collisions.

Sounds pretty near perfect, doesn't it, old chap? Well, almost. It wouldn't be British if it didn't have a few peculiarities and peccadilloes. Other vehicles have bells and whistles. The Range Rover has beeps. With sonar sensors in front and back it beeps when objects cross its path from either end. There were other mysterious

beeps during my test drive that I couldn't quite figure out and at one point in my city drive, after another beep, a message flashed stating that "off-road driving should not be attempted at speeds in excess of 50 km/h". I couldn't decide if this was a condemnation of either my driving style or of the condition of Ontario roads.

While I was puzzling over the beeps, I was also trying to figure out which controls did what and how to use the GPS Navigation touch-screen display.

"RTFM," I kept mumbling to myself, which means, read the f*%&ing manual! But you really shouldn't have to dig through the glove box for the book if the controls are designed to be intuitively understood. I was having trouble even figuring out the door locks.

As impressive as some of Land Rover's technology is there's always that dichotomy of technological confusion, along with a few yester-tech leftovers like the 6 CD cartridge instead of an in-dash player, and the lack of DVD entertainment. And at this price level you've got to lead, not follow.

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