

# What's new/spectacular in the 2024 MX-5?

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I took delivery of my new January 2024-built MX-5 RF GT Automatic on 28 March 2024 with just 13km on its display. How does it compare with my previous 2021 RF? Let me count the ways ...

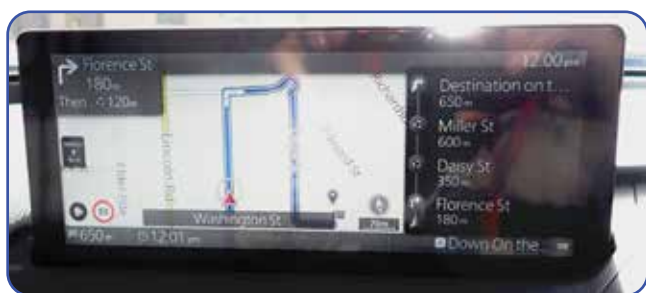
## Systems management

Many of the new operating systems require time spent working through the car's menus, and a new smartphone App.



**CarPlay when the smartphone is plugged in (in a commercial holder!)**

For example, the switch for night vision setting on the rearview mirror is now a menu selection rather than a physical switch on the mirror. As well, a number of functions are only available when using the App, such as checking the tyre pressures.



The Mazda map on the display

## How to work out stuff?

That's an issue. A PDF file has replaced the printed manual, but the PDF file is not computer- or smartphone-friendly. It takes ages to locate one of the many tables of contents from which relevant information might then be found. But none of my questions relating to car control and CarPlay are answered by the manual. I have been back to my dealer twice (Max Kirwan in Preston) to chat with Sam in their service department to ask him "how do I ...?" I recommend that you stay friendly with your dealership staff. **Bottom line:** Mazda's approach to having an on line manual must dramatically improve.

There is a new "HELP" button above the windscreen near the rearview mirror. I eventually discovered that its function is briefly explained in the smartphone App. Press the button and a person will ring your mobile phone to check if you are OK. Help/Roadside Assistance is also available through the smartphone App.

## Devices

The new Victorian regulations relating to mobile phones has had a big impact on the new MX-5. The new regulations define a mobile phone as one of many devices, the use of which is regulated.

For example, your car's touchscreen is defined as an "inbuilt device" (see: Regulation 304A at page 419 of the "Road Safety Road Rules 2017"). Touching your Mazda's touchscreen to enter data (say, an address), when not "parked", is prohibited (Regulation 304H at page 432). Mazda's solution in the new MX-5 is to have a

display screen rather than a touchscreen. Unless the car is parked, the 2024 MX-5 does not permit the entry of address data. The car allows voice command to be used at any time (but such use may not be lawful if you are a "novice driver"; see Regulation 304GC "Who is a novice driver", at page 432). On our Club runs we use CB radios. Regulation 304B (2) reads in part: "A device does not include—(a) a CB radio or any other two-way radio".

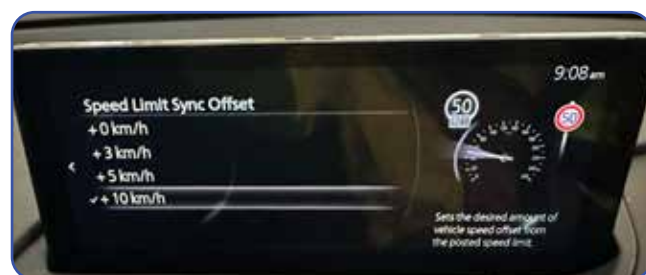
I notice that a device (smartphone) which is held up by a passenger and viewed by a driver is treated the same as if the driver is holding the smartphone (Regulation 304J (2) at page 438). And if a smartphone is not in a commercial holder, and the display screen is visible to the driver, you may also be cactus (see Regulation 304K at page 440). I have found no allowable circumstance in the Regulations in which I can touch my smartwatch, other than when I am parked.

**Note:** I am not a Legal Advisor – my objective in citing specific regulations is to make it easier for you to research your obligations. If you don't normally read Regulations, then note that VicRoads has several publications which explain the law. Be assured, however, that if you are not parked, and you make repeated jabs at your smartphone or your car's GPS, then a Police Officer is likely to take an interested in you.

## Cruise Control

Sadly, there's no Adaptive Cruise Control in Australia. But I am pleased to say that the revised cruise control (comparing my previous 10/2021-built and the current 01/2024-built models) has been dramatically improved. The system performs brilliantly on freeways. On downhills it will automatically slow the car in three steps: (1) starve the engine of fuel, (2) down change gears, and finally (3) apply the brakes. I am not yet comfortable with the automatic braking, but the system does a better speed-control job than I can. Pressing the brake turns the cruise control off, so, on balance, I am happy to rely on just the cruise control.

There is a menu selection where you can decide how close the car should stay to your selected cruising speed.



I have selected the smallest of the ranges as I think that will best protect my driver's licence. But, the cruise control is still fooled when a rise is immediately followed with a descent, so care must be taken.

## CarPlay

The new MX-5 comes with CarPlay as standard. I have a Q-mount for my mobile phone. The car and the smartphone work best when they are connected via a cable. Two USB C sockets are provided and both sockets have full functionality. CarPlay works using Bluetooth, but with far less functionality.



## Reversing camera

The reversing image on the MX-5's new display screen inspires confidence. The red and yellow lines *now stay still* when the steering wheel is moved. In my 10/2021 built MX-5 the lines moved as the steering wheel moved. I found it close to impossible to use the 10/2021 reversing image with any confidence.



The new reversing image inspires confidence

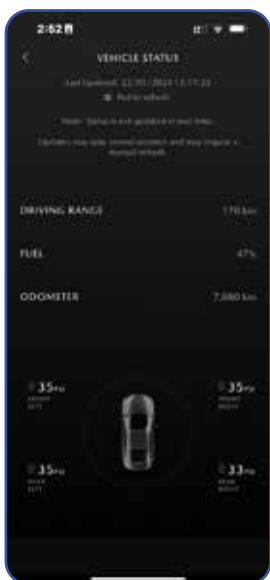
## Sport Mode

The automatic MX-5 still has a Sport Mode and shift paddles on the steering wheel. When *Sport* is selected I especially like hearing the gears down-change in proportion to the pressure applied to the brake pedal. I love the paddles, but I have also learnt that the car is reluctant to automatically change gears up or down immediately after a paddle selection has been made. That's a good thing. But I found this out in my 10/2021 MX-5 while I was trying to pass a series of slow cars: that car held the paddle-selected gear. I was close to the red line and no longer accelerating past the cars. It was a lesson well learnt.

## Fun novelties ... perhaps

### The App

- » will alert your smartphone if the car is left unlocked, and can then be used to lock the MX-5 remotely;
- » can be used to instruct the MX-5 to flash its headlights two, 10 or 30 times. That could be important if your (red) MX-5 is hiding in a long row of (red) MX-5s;
- » can be used to set, and then be advised if the MX-5 exceeds, a pre-set speed, or travels outside a specific radius. *Big Brother* can be watching for you when you allow a guest driver to take your MX-5 for a spin;
- » allows you to enter up to three navigation addresses. When you next start your MX-5 you are asked to accept or reject those instructions. I have used this feature but I have had mixed results – the system may try to take you to your end point and then to any waypoint. I guess I need to call past my Mazda Dealer and ask Sam for more help ...



Vehicle Status screen reports fuel available, the current odometer, and tyre pressures. My car's cold-tyre pressures are 32 psi.

## Speed limiter

The MX-5 now has a speed limiter which you might choose to use if you have a death wish. If flooring the accelerator is going to save your life, then the limiter will probably restrict your chances of survival. But you could tell the limiter to allow you to exceed your selected limit by a number of pre-set variances. It may be useful to use the *Limit* function to set a maximum speed that will keep your licence safe-ish, but allow you a significant amount of extra speed, should 'staying alive' require that additional speed.

## Speed Limit sign reading

I use Mazda's Speed Limit sign reading system to warn me if I have not slowed down for a new (reduced) speed limit. In the 10/2021 MX-5, if the speed-limit warning was selected, the MX-5 would beep one warning. I found this incredibly useful. With the 01/2024 MX-5, double beeps seem to go on continuously until you reduce your speed to your pre set tolerance, or another Speed Limit sign appears. The new system is a painful, inhumane punishment. This is particularly so for non active 40kmh school zones. Mazda needs to return to a warning beep, discarding the new continuous beeps.

The Mazda's reading of "Speed Limit" signs has improved. For example, 2024 MX-5 will usually ignore a sign that has "Ahead" displayed under the soon-to-apply speed. But it routinely reads speed limit signs that are not relevant. For example, on one of my regular routes, the MX-5 reads a difficult to see 10kmh tram limit, and applies it (with continuous double beeps) in the 60kmh zone that I am actually in. With some exceptions (which I still don't understand) the MX-5 continuously double-beeps until you slow down or another speed limit sign is encountered.

## Front sensors

I purchased optional front sensors (to aid in parking). These extras are installed in Australia by the Mazda Dealer, and needs the nose cone to be removed from the car. Mine are installed but are not operational. The 2024 MX-5 requires a different "black box" (mounted under the dashboard) as compared to earlier model MX-5s. *My front sensors will not be operative until Mazda Australia have designed and manufactured the required part.* That's not very impressive, in my view.

## Rear-braking assist

From the car's menu options, I have selected rear-braking assist. If I am reversing from a carpark, and I have a foot gently on the brake, and some impatient car or pedestrian sneaks behind me, the brake assist will instantly stop my reversing car. *Good one, Mazda.*

**My biggest personal gripe** with the new MX-5 is the level of optimism of the speedometer. Most folks are accustomed to overly-optimistic speedometers. But they should not be indifferent. The new MX 5 has speed-management systems that require better speed accuracy than the Australian Design Rule of 10%. My 10/2021 MX-5 had the ability to warn me if I was 3kmh over a speed limit, which kept me safe from speed cameras. Because of the optimism of the 01/2024 speedometer, I am now warned if I am 6kmh or 7kmh over a speed limit. **That is no defence from a camera.**

## Conclusion

**I am of the view that Mazda Design Standards should never default to Australian Design Rules (ADRs). Mazda should comply when compliance is necessary, but strive to do better than ADRs when they can. ■**