

Range Rover Sport TDV8 (2007-2009) and TDV6 (2005 – 2009) Buyer's Guide

Disclaimer

Please note that the author and forum have provided the following information in good faith to assist potential owners to assess a vehicle before purchasing. The responsibility for fully inspecting any vehicle to reveal any defects rests solely with the purchaser.

General

Before viewing the car you may find it useful to visit the Land Rover technical website here:

<http://topix.landrover.jlrext.com/topix/vehicle/lookupForm>

Enter the model and year you are interested in click 'find' and click the 'owner' tab and it is possible to view the Owners Handbook with explanations of the cockpit controls. This includes a summary 'quick start' section for the impatient.

Do all the usual generic checks relevant to any car including an HPI check (see AutoTrader/Parker's Guide etc.)

Do not accept the salesman's explanation of TADTS (They All Do That Sir) if you notice a fault.

An alternative Land Rover favourite is ICOTVS (Its Characteristic of The Vehicle Sir).

When looking a car ask yourself if it looks loved. Is the interior immaculate with no wear marks on the trim, steering wheel, carpets or doors? Are there any scratches around the locks where someone has shut the doors/tailgate with the keys in their hand. It should be possible to see if the previous owner was an enthusiast or just didn't care.

Some non-franchised dealers have a policy of 'blinging up' standard cars with bigger wheels and fancy grilles and side vents then setting a higher price. Such 'polished turds' may be best avoided. The dealer has probably spent money on the bling instead of paying attention to servicing.

Service History

Services are due annually or at 15,000 mile intervals, whichever occurs first. The first service is an 'A' service (oil and filter) and the next service is a 'B' service which requires more work and then the next service is a 'B' and so on. Check in the service book that there are stamps for every year of age.

In addition to the standard 'A' and 'B' services the following should have been done and marked in the service book:

Every 2 years or 30,000 miles: Replace fuel filter.

Every 3 years or 45,000 miles: Replace brake fluid.

Every 3 years or 45,000 miles: Replace the air cleaner element.

Every 5 years or 75,000 miles: Replace transfer case oil.

Every 6 years or 90,000 miles: Replace all flexible brake hoses.

Every 7 years or 105,000 miles: Replace the ancillary drive belt.

Every 7 years or 105,000 miles: Replace camshaft timing belt and high pressure fuel pump driving belt. (n.b. TDV6 only; the TDV8 camshafts are chain driven).

Every 10 years or 150,000 miles: Replace the engine coolant.

Every 10 years or 150,000 miles: Renew automatic transmission fluid.

Every 10 years or 150,000 miles: Renew front and rear differential oil. (5 years if rear diff is 'active' type).

Do not accept 'we don't keep the service books on site sir'. This means the service book has been lost and the dealer hasn't had time to recreate/falsify a service history using a blank book yet.

Unbelievably for a major manufacturer Land Rover did not maintain a central servicing database until 2013 this means that if the service book is lost you cannot check service history with Land Rover unless you determine at which dealership each service was carried out. Even if you find that information some dealerships won't give you any information from their records owing to a (common) misinterpretation of the Data Protection Act.

Land Rover Customer Services can tell you if a vehicle has any outstanding recalls but that's it.

Paint and Bodywork

Inspect every panel individually for scratches, dents and uniform panel gaps to the adjacent panels. Uneven gaps are indicative of a repaired or replaced panel. Open the doors, bonnet and tailgates (the glass tailgate opens separately) and look for signs of paint overspray which are a telltale sign of paint repair. Pay particular attention to the wheelarch lips looking for signs of corrosion where paint has been worn away by road grit flung up by the tyres. Mudflaps where fitted will have afforded some useful protection and usually indicate a caring owner. Each wheelarch lip should have an edge protector fitted; if these are missing or in poor condition take note but replacements are inexpensive.

Check that the front and rear (central) tow eye covers are present and secured by the original turn buttons.

Check that the spare wheel is present, (slung under the rear of the car they are an easy target for thieves), is secure and whether it is a space saver (plain black painted) or full size. An effective security device is available from a forum member.

Each door should have a thimble-shaped rubber bumper in the lower rear corner of the inward facing side; these are easily dislodged and lost when washing. Replacements are easily and cheaply sourced.

Examine all the exterior light lenses for scratches and cracks.

Examine the paint finish on every panel for 'swirl marks' and 'fisheyes' the presence of these suggests careless washing. Paint can be corrected by a good detailer but allow a budget of £500 for this specialist job.

Wheels and Tyres

Check that the wheels are standard Land Rover and correct for the manufacturing year range. Standard sizes are 19 and 20 inch. Many used Sports have been fitted with aftermarket 22 inch wheels but be aware many of these will be of questionable quality or suitability for such a large heavy vehicle and may have a detrimental effect on handling and comfort. On pre 2008 MY vehicles if 22 inch wheels are fitted an uprated steering rack must be fitted to avoid problems with knocking noises. If the wheel outer rims are damaged from contact with kerbs allow up to £100 per wheel for repair.

Tyres should be marked with '106Y' load rating. Budget 'South-East Asian Ditchfinder' tyres are not acceptable on these vehicles. Tyres should all be the same size and manufacturer and tread pattern and be evenly worn. Uneven wear or mixture of different brands suggests a lack of care and worn suspension and/or incorrect alignment. Adjustment to alignment can be made at all four corners.

Suspension

The air suspension has three user-selectable heights: access (lowest), normal and off-road. Check that all three heights can be quickly selected and that the suspension compressor stops running soon after a height increase is selected. If the suspension compressor runs noisily it may be loose and/or failing. There are two further heights above off-road: extended and additional but these can only be invoked automatically when the car is grounded. There should be no warning messages in the instrument message centre once the selected height is achieved. A new compressor costs about £500 and takes a couple of hours to fit.

Loss of height or drooping at one end or one side when left standing suggests a leak in the air suspension system. Diagnosis and rectification can be expensive but can also be inexpensive if only a small part such as a valve block needs replacing. Height sensor failure is common but these are easily and cheaply replaced.

The sport is prone to development of knocking noises from the suspension. Knocks when travelling over badly maintained road surfaces usually indicates worn anti-roll bar bushes. Knock on sharp braking from low speeds suggests worn suspension lower arm bushes. Where 'Dynamic response' also sometimes referred to as 'Active Roll Control' is fitted (standard on the TDV8) careful inspection of the hydraulic actuators situated in the middle of the anti-roll bars for leaks is essential; look at the seal where the anti-roll bar exits the actuator; dampness is normal but any drips probably indicate complete replacement is required and a single unit costs around £900 plus fitting. Leaks from the hydraulic pipe unions can usually be rectified by replacing the 'O' rings in the union.

Engine

Check that the battery (under cover at the rear of the offside of engine compartment) is a genuine Land Rover item. It is said that non LR branded batteries can cause problems because there is an integrated system of battery management software, battery and alternator which requires all items to be 'matched'. This may be a myth but no-one really seems to know.

Check the engine oil level with the dipstick (should be between the two blobs and at the upper end of the range). There should be no signs of oil leaks and the coolant level in the expansion tank should be slightly above the minimum fill mark when cold. The coolant should be amber/orange in colour.

Turn the key to position two and after the engine checks are completed and the glow plug light goes out the engine should start on the first turn of the key from cold. Typical diesel clatter should be subdued when cold and reduce when warmed up. Any loud whistling or whine from the turbo(s) under acceleration indicates a failing turbo. There should be no smoke white or black on acceleration. (Owners with a remapped engine ECU report that under acceleration there is some black smoke however).

There should be no warning lights illuminated when running and driving, no 'bongs' and no messages on the information centre.

Brakes

Looking through the wheel spokes check that the discs are not scored and do not have more than a slight lip at the outer edge and that pads have at least 5mms of friction material remaining.

The electric park brake (EPB) should not make more than subdued whine for second or so when it is activated and deactivated. Loud squealing/barking noises indicate imminent failure.

On braking there should be no judder or pull to one side.

Transmission

The automatic gearbox has 6 gears. The shifter should move smoothly; stiffness suggests there is a problem with a seizing pivot on the outside of the gearbox which is easily and cheaply rectified but should be fixed before purchase. Modes that can be selected are Normal, Sport and Command Shift; check that all are functioning with no warning messages on the message centre. Check that kick down is functional (changes down two gears) and all up and down shifts are smooth with no thumping into gear.

Select Low-range and drive around at low speed for 400 yards; there should be no nasty noises.

Drive up a hill with moderate acceleration and check there is no shuddering (cattle grid effect) and that the revs don't fluctuate by about 200-500 revs as this is indicative of a failing torque converter lock-up clutch.

Listen for any whining or vibration particularly when accelerating or decelerating from moderate speed as this may indicate a failing front or rear differential (a known problem).

(Rumbling noise which is louder when cornering may indicate a failing wheel bearing.)

Electrical Equipment

Check every button, switch and knob works. Switch the screen to 4x4 information mode and check there are no red warnings.

Check the front and rear parking sensors work normally if fitted (they are visible).

Lock the car from the outside with the fob and then try to open each door in turn and the fuel filler flap (press it at the rear). It is common for door latch mechanisms to fail (most commonly driver's) and not lock with the remote. Fix is a new latch at about £80 and an hour or so labour to fit. If the fuel

filler flap does not lock it needs either a new latch (they tend to be broken by careless owners) or a new actuator.

Interior trim

Lift up the panel in the luggage compartment floor and check the tools:

- Screwdriver handle
- Screwdriver blade
- Jack handle (two piece)
- Wheelbrace
- Wheel chocks (2)
- Scissor jack
- Locking wheelnut key
- Towing eye

Check the roller-blind luggage cover is present and functional.

Check the carpets very carefully for signs of dampness especially in the driver and passenger footwells. Usual causes of water ingress are blocked sun roof drains, external A pillar trim faults, blocked or leaking air conditioning drains and warped or badly fitted plenum chamber cover allowing water to enter via the ventilation intake on the passenger side.

Leather seat trim should not be cracked, torn, punctured or worn although signs of wear to the driver's seat squab outside bolster are common.

Is the Sat Nav dash non-slip mat present?

Keys

There should be two keys as standard. It is not acceptable for a dealer to try and charge you for a second key if only one is present. Land Rover dealerships should charge about £160 to supply and code a second key if you lose one.

When a second key is coded to the car the code for the first key is also changed. This is a useful security precaution as then if a previous owner with a key tries to access your car he will be thwarted.

Issues specific to the TDV6 – Supplement

Servicing

The TDV6 engine although in the same 'Lion' series as the TDV8 has a significant difference in design in that a camshaft timing belt (cambelt) is incorporated. The important significance of this is that the timing belt (and nearby fuel pump driving belt) are scheduled to be changed at 7 years or 105,000 miles whichever occurs first. The TDV8 engine camshafts are driven by chain so there is no 'cambelt change' required in the service schedule.

As the TDV6 is an 'interference' engine failure of the cambelt causes catastrophic engine failure and the only solution is a new or replacement engine. Hence it is very important that the cambelt change is carried out on schedule. It has been reported that when changed at 105,000 miles (and also when

changed at much lower mileages such as 60,000 miles) the old belt and idler pulleys were in very poor condition suggesting that the scheduled change is too late so prudent owners change the cambelt at earlier age/mileage.

Another point of concern with the TDV6 engine is reported failures of the oil pump casting where it supports an idler pulley for the cambelt. The casting can break causing the timing belt to fail and results in catastrophic engine failure. This affects vehicles in the 2006 and 2007 manufacturing years (Vin numbers with 6A and 7A).

There is an upgraded oil pump casting: Part number LR013487 and prudent TDV6 owners should have this upgraded part fitted at the same time as the timing belt change.

Dynamic Response

A quick way to check if the vehicle is fitted with dynamic response is to look in the engine compartment for reservoir with a yellow cap with a pictogram of a 'wobbly car' near the front and on the offside. No cap no dynamic response.