

Test and Evaluation Results
of
Wilson Combat Magazine Release, Oversize, Stainless; Part Number 405S
by
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Test Pistol: Wilson Combat Classic Supergrade; .45acp

Initial Impression: Upon removing the oversize magazine release, hereafter referred to as the OMR, from its package, my initial overall impression was that I was holding a very nice high quality product. The finish of the OMR's body is smooth and uniform, and its geometry reflects distinct and solid lines. The thumb actuator was equally impressive with checkering sharp enough to be effective yet not so sharp that one's thumb would sustain abrasions during use. A+

Grip Requirement: Because of the OMR's low profile, one's pistol grips may require a cutout providing clearance in order for it to function reliably. The grips on my Supergrade are WC's G-10 Black and Gray Diagonal which have the necessary clearance. Absent a cutout, the primary factor determining whether or not a set of grips will allow the OMR to function properly is their thickness. I tested the OMR with three different sets of grips all without a cutout. First, I installed a set of Esmeralda O'Sheehan presentation grade cocobolo grips and there was enough clearance for the OMR to function perfectly. I then installed a set of WC Kingwood grips (part # 351K) and the OMR also performed flawlessly. When I installed a set of WC ivory grips, however, I found that their thickness prevented the OMR from functioning. Generally speaking, ivory grips tend to be thicker than those made from wood. Because of this, I feel it is reasonable to say that most wooden grips will allow the ORM to function. The user must determine this for himself, however.

Installation: Removing the thumb actuator portion of the OMR with the supplied allen wrench in preparation for installation into the pistol's frame was easy, quick and smooth. The body slid into the pistol's frame with such ease and precision that one would think it had been custom fitted. Upon securing the body into the frame I reattached the checkered thumb actuator, depressed it and placed a small drop of WC Universal lube thereon. Installation was incredibly simple and problem free. A+

Pre-range Dry-fire Operation Test: Before heading to the range for a practical trial, I wanted to get a feel for the OMR's position and function. The height of the thumb actuator is slightly above the highest portion of the G10 grips, creating a low profile image. Being a right-handed shooter, I tend to rest my thumb atop the grip where the slide and frame meet. Utilizing a two-handed firing position, I was able to allow my thumb to drop straight down onto the actuator without having to feel for it and without having to alter my grip. I could then apply pressure to eject the magazine. Returning my

thumb to the desired firing position was equally fast and efficient. I conducted fifty magazine speed changes with such effective ease that I did not even have to think about the process. The oblong shape of the actuator provides extremely positive contact with one's thumb and allows the pressure applied during the ejection process to spread equally onto the OMR's body, resulting in a smooth, snag-free process. The feel of the actuator on my thumb is superb. A+

Live-fire Test: My live-fire magazine change tests varied in scope from slow-fire Bullseye shooting to action pistol style shooting to flat out emptying the magazine and inserting a new one as quickly as possible without regard for accuracy. Throughout each test I was able to locate and depress the OMR with such ease and speed that, again, there was no thought process involved. Each magazine change was lightning fast, effective and efficient. To prevent the thumb actuator retention screw from shooting loose, I suggest applying a drop of blue Loc-Tite on the threads. Even if the screw holding the thumb actuator to the body of the OMR were to fall off causing the actuator itself to fall off as well, one can still easily use the remaining body to eject the magazine. This OMR has exceeded my expectations. A+

Premature Ejection: Historically, extended magazine releases have been designed and marketed for competitive shooters where the need for quick magazine changes is of paramount importance. These devices are generally round in shape and possess enough height for the shooter's thumb to rapidly find its mark. These devices are great when the pistol is used as intended for competition by experienced shooters.

Pistols not exclusively designed or modified for competition tend to be handled and carried differently than those that are. I have witnessed shooters on civilian and law enforcement ranges alike accidentally activate their pistol's extended magazine release, sending the magazine bouncing along the ground. Dropping one's magazine prematurely during a competitive match will result in the loss of time and points, possibly even the event itself - but that's all. Dropping a magazine during a self-defense situation could cost one his life. It is for this reason that extended magazine releases are generally not recommended for these types of pistols, but things are about to change.

During the course of my testing I used two different holsters, both of which are designed for self-defense concealed carry: a WC Lo-Profile Thumb Break and a SuperTuck Deluxe waistband holster made by CrossBreed Holsters. My intent in using concealed carry holsters was to see if their design would directly cause the OMR to prematurely eject the magazine while the weapon was secured therein or somehow contribute to operator error during the presenting process. I encountered absolutely no problems with premature activation throughout the entire testing process. A+

Summary: I love this oversized magazine release. I feel that it offers enough of a profile to provide the shooter with an extremely effective platform with which to expedite rapid magazine changes and yet is small enough to minimize the likelihood of a premature magazine release. I encountered no premature releases whatsoever. Because of this, I feel that this OMR can safely be used for all shooting applications. Additionally, its shape and

size should allow comfortable, effective use by shooters with a large variety of hand sizes. There is a small part of me that would like to see the shape of the thumb actuator oval instead of oblong. If it were oval in shape, it would blend in and contrast beautifully against the oval WC grip cutout. An oblong actuator against an oval grip cutout does not look bad; it just does not visually provide the same smooth flowing effect presented by the pistol's other components. For an oval shaped actuator to be as effective as the oblong version, I feel it would have to be larger and in doing so might sacrifice practical effectiveness. I am happy to surrender a small amount of visual pleasantry in exchange for solid, highly proficient performance. This is an extremely useful and affordable accessory; I'd like to have one on each of my Wilson 1911s. A+

Final Overall Grade: A+