

In the Store: I have been interested in the 4" barreled Performance Center SHIELD since reading about it in May of 2019. I compared the S&W 9 PC M2.0 to the Glock 48 before deciding to continue to carry a SHIELD. Prior to the Performance Center editions, the M2.0 updates had not been enough to entice me to upgrade. The Performance Center package moved me to make the switch. The most appealing feature was the 4" barrel. It's 4" measured from the barrel hood.

The Performance Center line of 9mm Shields includes: SKU 11876 MSRP \$843, 4" barrel and 4 MOA Red Dot Sight Included; SKU 11787 MSRP \$543, 4" barrel (reviewed here); and SKU 11788 MSRP \$871, 4" ported barrel and 4 MOA Red Dot Sight Included. They are also available chambered in .40 S&W. The series chambered for .45 ACP are a larger than the 9mm/.40 S&W variants.

With a 4" barrel the length of the SHIELD is 7". The height is 5" with the 8 round magazine. The weight with an empty 8 round magazine is 23.4 ounces. The package comes with an 8 round magazine, a 7 round magazine, a gun lock, and a Performance Center branded portable cleaning kit. The SHIELD M2.0 still comes in a cardboard box like the original.

The Performance Center extended the slide and made the recoil spring cover long enough to extend back to the dust cover of the frame. The recoil spring is longer than a standard SHIELD and extends almost to the front of the slide. The recoil spring is a captured flat coil type. It is stiff and requires attention to position it correctly when reassembling.

The sights are fiber optic set in steel carriers that are dovetailed into the slide. The front is a single green pipe and the rear are red two dot. The front of the rear sight is flat making a ledge that could be used for cocking. the rear has horizontal line cut to reduce glare. The front post is .127" and the notch is .139". The sight radius is just shy of 6" at 5.95".

The frame appears to be the same as other M2.0 SHIELD models. While the surface texture is the new and improved M2.0, the rest of the geometry appears to be the same as the original. That is benefit if you have a laser sight like a Crimson Trace 489G to move to the new gun.

The frame is widest at the slide lock release at 1.027". The rest of the frame is svelte, with the widest portion of the grip at the palm swell at .953". there are not any adjustable parts on the frame to adjust the grip. What you get is what you get.

The length under the trigger guard to the opening of the magazine well is 1.6" at the front. With the 7 round magazine it is 1.85". With the 8 round magazine it is 2.33". This gives enough distance for me to get a full three finger grip. To make the 7 round magazine usable to me I replace the factory floor plate with a grip extension from Fixxxer. Humm, did I say something about modifications to carry guns? Oh, that's later.

The slide rails are .5" in the front and .4" at the rear. Smith & Wesson advertises an "Embedded Stainless Steel Chassis System" for the Performance Center SHIELD.

Speculation on my part is to see this "chassis" become modular in the M3.0 version. The SHIELD rails are .755" wide while the full size M&P rails are .903" wide. A unified chassis for all M&P semi-autos may be an bridge to far to engineer.

The take down lever, Magazine release, and slide stop release are only on the left side. The magazine release is not reversible.

The trigger is the standard M&P hinged variety with the Performance Center upgrade to make it very smooth. The length of pull to the DAO trigger is 2.73". There is take up to 2.57" where a very firm wall is felt. The striker is released at about 2.47". Full pull is 2.41". Reset occurs at about 2.54". Tested with a Lyman Digital gauge the pull was 4 pounds 10.8 ounces. The trigger is superior to the standard Glock trigger. One of the comments a salesman made when comparing the M&P 9 PC M2.0 and the Glock 48 was that he would replace the Glock trigger first, sights second.

I have an aversion to making changes to defensive carry guns but that clearly doesn't apply to magazine grip extensions. Maybe it's just the trigger I have an aversion to changing on a carry gun.

At the Range: The M2.0 texture, longer barrel, and 9mm chambering makes for pleasant shooting. The new gun handled Remington 115gr FMJ and Federal 124gr HST hollowpoints without problem. The best 3 shot group measured 1.15" at 45'. I went back to my review of the .40 S&W original SHIELD with the 3.1" barrel where the best 3 shot group was 1.25" at 12 yards. The new gun allowed me to shoot a tighter group at a longer distance. Translation: a longer effective range. – Greg Poole, December 30, 2019.