

**The Opinion:** At the Gun Store - The fish scale cuts at the rear of the slide, the curved cut grip panels on the frame, the slide release, the take down lever, and the cut of the slide all identify this as a Smith & Wesson Military & Police. The Shield was introduced in 2012 as a sub-compact extension of the M&P line of striker fired, polymer frame, semi-automatic pistols. Slimmer, lighter, shorter than the MSP 40C, the Shield has become a popular concealed carry and backup duty gun.

Unlike the larger M&P pistols, the Shield does not have an accessory rail, interchangeable palm swells, ambidextrous slide release, or a reversible magazine release.

The Shield 40 comes with two magazines in a cardboard box. The magazines are a flush fit 6 round, and an extended 7 round. With the flush fit magazine the front strap is only 1.835". Not enough for me. I like the extended magazine with the XGrip like filler between the frame and the floor plate making the front strap 2.276". With a Pearce aftermarket grip extension on the flush fit 6 round magazine, the front strap extends to 2.5".

If you need even more length you could put the Pearce grip extension on the extended magazine which would get you almost another ¾". But if you're getting the grip that long, you could probably carry a compact or full size instead of this sub-compact.

The take down is like every other S&W M&P semi-auto. Drop the magazine, lock the slide back, verify the chamber is clear, depress the little disconnect lever inside the magazine well, rotate the take down lever down 90 degrees, release the slide off the frame, take out the bound dual recoil spring, and take the barrel out of the slide.

When I took the barrel out it felt lighter than I expected. It is a relatively thin wall. When compared to a 9mm Shield barrel, the OD is the same. The difference in approximately .4 ounces (10 grams) is the difference in the metal taken out of the bore and chamber for the .40 S&W round. The feed ramp is slightly wider on the .40 S&W barrel.

The sights are standard 3 white dot. They are in dovetail slots and are replaceable.

The trigger looks like other M&P triggers with the hinge block safety. It breaks around 6 pounds. The length of pull is 2.73" with .13" of take up. The break is about .13" later. The reset is back at the point where the take up ended. The total trigger travel from start of pull to the end of over travel is .312". Over travel is not adjustable. After the break there is only about .052" of over travel.

Without an accessory rail the choices for laser sights and/or lights is going to mount to the trigger guard. One such laser sight is the Crimson Trace Laser Guard 489 or 489G (for green laser). These are also available as a combination gun and laser sight from Smith & Wesson. Not really a shocker since Smith & Wesson bought Crimson Trace last year.

Did I mention Smith & Wesson is offering a \$75 rebate from April 1 through June 20, 2017 on new Shields? makes me wonder when the Shield M2.0 will be arriving.

**At the Range:** My one great fear of shooting the Shield 40 was that the .40 S&W round would turn the Shield into a Kel-Tec PF9 like experience. Read my review of the PF9 to get the whole story. The summary is that it is an uncomfortable gun to shoot. I am not disparaging the PF9's reliability or usefulness as a concealed carry gun. I'm saying I was hesitant to practice with it and that made it unsuitable for me to carry.

I don't want a gun that I loath to practice with. That was the fear I had in going back to a .40 S&W in a carry gun.

I had been able to shoot a 9mm Shield extensively and found it controllable. I didn't know anyone who had the .40 S&W version and the local gun shops didn't

have one to rent. I hadn't seen many on the used counters over the last couple of years. When the rebates came out in April and I got a sale price I took the risk and purchased a new one.

By risk I mean my fear that the M&P Shield 40 would be uncomfortable to shoot and I would not want to practice with it. After running a patch down the bore I went to the range and fired a cautionary first round. The gun went bang as expected and I wasn't wincing in pain. Oh that's a good sign. So off I went on a 100 round range session.

The .40 S&W clearly produces more muzzle flip than the 9mm, but I don't have a way to quantify it. I'll just say I didn't feel abused after running 100 rounds through it.

At about 12 yards the best three shot group from this session was 1.25". Not bad out of a 3.1" barrel using Winchester 180 grain Jacketed Hollow Points. The gun ran without a hiccup through Federal 180 gr aluminum case ammo and Winchester 165 gr Full Metal Jacket ammo as well.

The worst 3 shot group was 3.5" and the average over 16 3 shot targets was 2.125". This was all at a distance of about 12 yards. When I fired full magazines the group size averaged 3.1" at the same distance. – Greg Poole April 26, 2017