

THE GREEN MACHINE

STREAMLIGHT'S NEW TLR-8G LIGHT/GREEN LASER IS SUPER CAPABLE.

STREAMLIGHT HAS BEEN CONSIDERED

one of the top brands in tactical flashlights since I first put on a police officer's uniform in 1992. Back then it was hand-held flashlights, the big kind that doubled as batons when necessary. At the time (we're talking pre-LED lights here, people—practically the Stone Age) the technology didn't exist to put capable flashlights or lasers on duty handguns, as they weren't small enough to fit or durable enough to handle the recoil.

Times have definitely changed, and Streamlight has stayed on top of fast-moving illumination technology, continuing to offer category-leading products. The best example of that is its new TLR-8G, a green-laser version of Streamlight's popular compact TLR-8 light/red laser.

The TLR-8G is physically identical in size and weight to the TLR-8, the only difference you'll see is the name on the side of the unit. It is just 2.15 inches long, 1.5 inches tall (including the rail clamp) and 1.2 inches wide. Officially Streamlight lists the weight of the TLR-8G as 2.4 ounces, but that's empty. When you stuff a CR123A battery inside, the weight goes up to 2.6 ounces according to my digital scale, which is the equivalent weight to half a dozen rounds of 9mm ammo, depending on your bullet weight. In other words, it's very light.

The body of the TLR-8G is aluminum, as is the lens housing. According to Streamlight the rear of the unit, the switch housing, is constructed of "impact and chemical resistant engineered polymer with elastomeric overmold." Let me translate that into Walmart English for you: The back of it, including the switches, is plastic with a rubbery texture, to keep your



▲ The new Streamlight TLR-8G is constructed of aluminum and weighs less than three ounces. The batteries can be changed simply by unscrewing the lens housing, and a Safe-off feature prevents accidental activation.

fingers from slipping and help keep the weight down.

The unit features Streamlight's "Safe off" feature, which prevents accidental activation during transport or storage. Rotate the lens' aluminum housing about a quarter-turn counter-clockwise until you feel it click into the detent, and the activation pads for the light/laser will not function—until you rotate the housing back.

I like the fact you can swap out the battery on this unit without needing to use tools. I saw the tiny Allen head screws on the back of the unit and initially thought I'd be required to undo those to replace the battery, but no. Just unscrew the aluminum lens housing at the front of the unit, for which you need only your fingers.

For obvious reasons, Streamlight recommends taking the unit off your handgun before doing this, as you'd be working in front of the muzzle, and one of the four basic rules of gun

safety is that every gun is loaded, period.

Attaching the TLR-8G to your handgun is just as simple. The aluminum clamp is built into the body of the unit, and there is one screw to tighten it, which can be worked with a coin. If you undo and remove the screw you'll be able to insert the appropriate polymer adapter—the rail key—into the top of the unit in order to fit the rail to your handgun. (The TLR-8G is shipped with one rail key installed and a variety of other keys included.) The screw itself doesn't go through the cross slot of a tactical rail; that's accomplished by a block at the top of the polymer adapter.

The unit should be mounted as far back on your handgun as possible, so the activation pads are easy to reach either with your trigger finger or the thumb of your support hand.

Activation is simple, which is exactly what you want on a light/laser.

Press either one of the pads on →

← the sides of the unit, at the rear, to turn it on. If you press and hold the pad the light/laser will stay on until you release it. If you double-tap either pad within a quarter-second you get a strobe (only from the light, the laser keeps a steady beam). You have your choice of light only, laser only or light/laser combo. To cycle between modes, with the unit on press both activation pads at once. It's that simple.

The laser is adjusted horizontally and vertically via two small hex screws on the left side of the unit. As for the flashlight, you don't need to worry about its direction because it throws a broad beam—roughly 120 degrees wide, which means anybody more or less in front of you more than a few feet away will be lit up by the flashlight.

While there are no hard edges on the beam, it is dimmer near the edges, and there is a brighter center section. At a distance of five yards, the brighter center section is more than three feet across. But remember, that's only the center of the beam. From 15 feet, the whole of the beam illuminates a circle roughly 20 feet wide.

Five hundred lumens equates to 4300 candela, and Streamlight lists the flashlight beam effective distance as 131 meters, which is far beyond the likely distance you'd be using a handgun. Streamlight makes sure to point out that the green laser is eye-safe at any range.

If you're not up to speed on why green lasers have become popular, it's because they are much brighter to the naked eye than red lasers—

bright enough they can often be used in daylight, which increases their utility. However, green lasers are harder to make than red, which makes them more expensive, and they usually burn through the batteries more quickly. There ain't no such thing as a free lunch.

Using just the light or the light/laser combo on the TLR-8G, the run time with the one CR123A battery is 1.5 hours—same as the light/red-laser TLR-8. However, run time with laser only is 11 hours, which is seven hours shorter than the laser-only run time on the TLR-8.

Suggested retail price on the TLR-8G is \$450, which prices it \$100 more than the TLR-8, but that extra money gets you a green laser that is daylight visible in all but the most extreme circumstances. 