



# FOGHORN

**APRIL 2025**

*Twobirds Flying Publications*

---



**Smith & Wesson's NEW CSX E Series**

**Enhanced Performance, Everyday Carry.**

## Smith & Wesson's NEW CSX E Series

By: Sal Palma



In this review, we dissect the Smith & Wesson CSX E Series pistol, and answer if it is a significant improvement over the original CSX.

The Smith & Wesson CSX E-series pistol was introduced in January 2025 as an evolution of the original CSX, with enhancements aimed at improving the user's experience, particularly for concealed carry.

Smith & Wesson sought to achieve:

- Enhanced Ergonomics and Control
- Improved Trigger
- Increased Capacity Magazines
- Optics Ready
- Modular Grip and Customization

Did Smith & Wesson meet their objective?  
We think they did.

A pistol's grip design is paramount for effective and safe concealed carry, particularly with compact and micro-compact models. Just as ill-fitting shoes

hinder walking or running, a poor grip compromises control and stability. These smaller 9mm pistols generate significant recoil, demanding a firm, consistent hold to mitigate 'bite' and maintain accurate fire. Smith & Wesson improved the E Series grip in several ways.

The E-Series features more aggressive grip texturing, particularly on the frame's front strap. This enhancement provides a more secure hold, which is essential for managing the recoil in a micro-compact pistol. My hand did not feel abused.

A feature contributing to the CSX E ergonomics is the inclusion of a modular grip adapter. This allows users to customize the grip size. The grip geometry that ships with the pistol fits me like a glove, so I did not use the grip adapter; however, shooters with larger hands will find the grip adapter a welcomed inclusion.

Lastly, if the pistol is going to accommodate higher capacity magazines, the grip and grip adapter need to support 12, 15 and 17 round magazines. Grip size is therefore wider providing a secondary benefit of comfort and excellent purchase.

In my experience, the S&W CSX E grip stands out as one of the most ergonomic and comfortable grips of pistols in its class. The CSX 2's bore axis is low, so the extended beaver tail does an excellent job of mitigating slide bite.





In assessing selection of micro-compact and compact concealed carry pistols, trigger performance is a critical factor.

A key improvement in the Smith & Wesson CSX Series E is its enhanced trigger. The pre-travel, or take-up, has been shortened, decreasing the distance required to engage the sear. Measured trigger pull weight averaged 5 pounds, 8 ounces (5.5 lbs.).

Furthermore, the trigger break was a crisp, clean release, without a noticeable creep or stacking. The reset distance, the distance the trigger must travel forward before re-engaging the sear, was short, facilitating rapid follow-up shots. An audible reset click provided tactile and auditory feedback, confirming reset completion and enhancing shooter confidence during rapid firing sequences. This combination of reduced pre-travel, consistent pull weight, clean break, short reset, and audible reset feedback contributes to improved controllability and accuracy in a concealed carry scenario.

The CSX Series E pistol is equipped with ambidextrous external safety and as a single action hammer-fired pistol, it incorporates a 1911-style half-cocked position, which acts as a safety feature by preventing firing.



The slide's design incorporates aggressive forward leaning front and rear serrations, significantly improving grip for clearing malfunctions and general handling. Both the slide lock and manual safety are fully ambidextrous, catering to left- and right-handed users.



The CSX Series E ships with three magazines 12, 15 and 17. Smith & Wesson provides magazine sleeves. The magazine sleeves, or spacers, fill the gap between the base of the longer magazines and the frame of the pistol. This ensures a smooth and

comfortable grip, regardless of which magazine is used.



“Cleanliness is next to Godliness” but field stripping the CSX E series is a bit awkward.



After clearing the pistol (removing the magazine and ensuring there is no ammunition in the chamber), confirm that the hammer is fully cocked. You then need to bring the slide back and hold it in place so that the small notch on the left side of the slide is aligned with the slide lock lever.

Next, without releasing the slide, rotate the pistol so that you have access to its right-side slide lock lever.



Using the tool provided push the pin through. The left-side slide lock lever will release and fall out allowing you to remove the slide.

The procedure has a 1911 flavor to it but requires a bit of manual dexterity.

The CSX E's stock sights, while functional, presented challenges for accurate shooting, especially in low-light environments. Fortunately, upgrading to sights like the XS Sights DXT2 Pro addresses this issue. These high-quality sights provide exceptional brightness and clarity, facilitating quick and precise target engagement under all lighting conditions.



**XS Sights DXT2 Pro**

In designing the CSX E Series, Smith & Wesson fully expected that owners would equip the pistol with a red dot sight hence the three dot OEM sights.

To install a red dot sight on the CSX E Series, requires that you remove the plate which also removes the OEM rear sight. So, if your optic fails you have no backup sights.



While the optic offers advantages, the elimination of traditional backup iron sights is a major concern for some users. The importance of this trade-off varies based on individual needs and the firearm's intended application. Although the Holosun 407K used in the review features a rudimentary rear sight, many, including myself, prefer a dedicated, blacked-out rear sight.



At the range, the CSX E performed extremely well. Across a range of 9mm ammunition I did not experience failures to feed or eject. I limited ammunition to 115 and 124 grain to preserve a higher muzzle velocity and corresponding kinetic energy.



Felt recoil was less than competing micro compact pistols.



The trigger was clean and crisp with an extremely short reset allowing for a very controlled rapid fire. The target shown was shot at 10 yards using a full 12 round

magazine. I attribute the results to the CSX E's outstanding trigger.

In summation, the S&W CSX E presents an exciting package for the concealed carry market. While it may not revolutionize the

micro-compact pistol market, it offers a distinct set of advantages worthy of serious consideration. Its slim profile, coupled with a well-designed grip, facilitates comfortable all-day carry and manageable recoil for its size. The 17+1 capacity provides a reassuring amount of firepower lacking in several of its competitors.

Its ergonomics is the hallmark of the CSX E. The inclusion of easily swappable backstraps and the ambidextrous controls contribute to a user-friendly and flexible experience, making it accessible to all shooters. Furthermore, the pistol's reliability, demonstrated through consistent cycling and accuracy, instills confidence in its ability to perform when needed. The minimal dimensions allow the CSX E to disappear under clothing, making it a viable option for those prioritizing discretion.

Ultimately, the decision to purchase any firearm is a personal one. However, if you are searching for a lightweight, high-capacity, and reliable micro-compact pistol for everyday carry, the S&W CSX E deserves a spot on your shortlist. The CSX E, with its blend of features and ergonomic design, is a formidable contender in the crowded micro-compact space.

**-SP**

### **Manufacturer Specification**

- Width 1.12 in
- Length 6.6 in
- Height 4.6 in
- Weight 23.5 oz
- CALIBER 9MM
- SIZE MICRO-COMPACT
- CAPACITY 12,15,17
- ACTION SINGLE ACTION
- BARREL LENGTH 3.6
- GRIP POLYMER
- SIGHTS WHITE DOT
- OPTIC READ YES
- SAFETY THUMB SAFETY
- COLOR/FINISH BLACK
- STATE COMPLIANCE DE
- THREADED BARREL NO
- BARREL MATERIAL STAINLESS STEEL
- FRAME ALUMINUM
- LASER NO
- NUMBER OF MAGAZINES 3
- 10LB TRIGGER NO
- MODEL CSX