

STI Executive

When I first opened the box, in which the Executive came, I immediately knew that I'm looking on a truly exceptional piece. Executive is one of the "top of the line" weapons, with its features as well as with its finish.

The weapon is based on the model EDGE, which is popular amongst sport shooters, especially in IPSC Standard division. It is considered one of the best options for this division. Differences between these two weapons is mainly in finish – Executive looks better in its hard chrome finish with black markings. The fact that the weapon is designated more for sport and less for carrying is obvious from used materials and features. All parts are made from steel, magazine well is widened by big funnel, that increases the weight of the weapon. It weighs in at 1100g (38 oz.). Thanks to polymer grip and full length wide dustcover, most of this mass is moved towards the muzzle. This greatly reduces muzzle flip, even when using more powerful .40S&W caliber.

What can we see from the outside

STI Executive is weapon based on the legendary Colt 1911. It has barrel 5" long, fit directly in the slide, without bushing. This means the barrel can be bull-type, heavier, which also greatly reduces muzzle flip. The slide has racking serrations in back and in front. Because of the used caliber, these serrations in front are useful, mainly for persons with weaker grip, it makes racking the slide noticeably easier. Sights truly fit the sporting character of this weapon. Front sight is with light gathering fiber, rear sight is STI micrometric. Light gathering front sight is a great aid in quickly acquiring the target, the fiber really stands out in most light conditions. These are positives for sport (IPSC). Front sight with fiber uncovered, like here, can be a bit fragile and direct hit would necessitate the change of the fiber. This is not so much a problem, as this is almost impossible to happen in use for sport. We'll look into carrying various weapons in some of the other articles.

The weapon is not fitted with extra firing pin block, but the firing pin has heavier spring, which is a solution used in Springfield Armory weapons, and it doesn't mean that the weapon would be less safe. Quite contrary, because the less little moving parts, the smaller is a chance that something will break and cause malfunction.

The slide is polished, with matte curve and matte serrations. The frame is whole matte and makes quite interesting contrast. The weapon is equipped with ambidextrous enlarged thumb safety and beavertail safety with notch for easier disengaging, which is necessary for sport. It also enables higher grip, which in turn causes less muzzle flip and reduces felt recoil for a bit.

The grip of the executive is grey, by default, to better blend in with light finish of the whole weapon. Unluckily, this is not good on pictures, in reality the gun looks even better. The trigger with titanium bow is in the same colour as the grip. The trigger is just as is needed in IPSC – crisp, clean move, no after travel.

The magazine release button is standard, but the gun can be ordered with larger button and also drilled/tapped button for wider and bigger buttons.

Magazine well is fitted to the gun with one pin, that also holds the mainspring housing, so it is easy to remove, when needed. The fit of this magwell to the frame is clean, without any overlap.

Magazines (for this gun are used magazines length 126mm, they are flush fit in the magwell) have the capacity of 15 rounds .40S&W, but with special basepads and followers, it can be up to 18 rounds.

What we can't see from the outside

Perfect fit and finish can be felt at the first touch. Pistol fits right in the hand and the magwell makes the hold even firmer. It is pointless to compare it with other "sport" specials, as the difference in quality is huge. Barrel to slide fit, slide to frame fit, as well as fit of other parts is second to none. The magwell makes reloading a breeze. Racking the slide requires greater strength (as I already stated), because the fit is tight and stronger springs are used to accommodate stronger caliber. After shooting several hundred rounds the racking gets a little easier, as the gun gets broken in, but no play is noticeable even after several thousand rounds.

Even though I don't particularly like .40S&W caliber, it is very pleasant in this gun. Thanks to long barrel, precise fit, weight on the right places (near the muzzle), the recoil is extremely manageable and not as sharp as usual. It is also less menacing to hands (and joints) of the shooter. The weight is "just right" for the recoil to be manageable, but not too much to make it slow on transitions between targets.

The shape of the grip, beavertail safety and magwell ensures, that after each shot, the weapon returns just on the same spot. Thanks to this, it is possible to „work“ with recoil and aim on other targets during recoil, splits between shots can be much shorter. Perfect fit, well tuned trigger and precise barrel are the necessary for precise weapon. Suffice to say that Executive fulfills and exceeds these requirements.

Conclusion

It is hard to say how the gun will measure in IPSC. We can measure how precise the weapon is when fixed, on any distance. But that's not the goal. IPSC is dynamic discipline. It requires that shooter and weapon are "one piece", that the shooter knows exactly how to handle his gun and how it will behave. That requires perfect weapon. Precise, dependable, one that will not have any malfunctions or other problems. STI weapons are just like that. That's why they are so popular among top shooters (not only sportsmen) around the world.

STI Executive is top of the line for STI and also top choice for STI, division Standard (special commemorative models excluded – they are not usual line of products).

For his money, the customer gets really great weapon, that will serve him many years and shoot many hundreds of thousands rounds.

I'd like to thank mr. Martinek, official importer and distributor of STI guns in Czech and Slovak Republics, for lending this gun for tests.

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