

The e-Tint Liquid Crystal Motorcycle Visor Insert

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Time was when my head was always covered with an Arai open-face helmet when I rode, and the visor that stuck out over the opening was a favorite item of mine. Now my helmet of choice is a modular with a flip-up chin bar/face shield (an HJC Sy-Max II), and I often miss the visor option. In fact, I've never liked having a face shield unless it's raining so I often raise it to where my view is under it.



The visor in its "light state".

Seeing Things Differently

And though my HJC *does* have an internal "Jet Pilot"-style tinted visor (a nice feature), I find it awkward to use, especially when passing through wooded areas with frequent breaks of sunlight. So I was a bit dismayed—that is, until I recently came across the e-Tint Liquid Crystal Motorcycle Visor Insert!

Available in manual and automatic models, it self-sticks to the inside of a face shield and electronically switches between clear and tint when triggered by sufficient sunlight. (Note: Do not confuse this with a "photochromatic" lens, which changes over a period of minutes. This insert changes RIGHT NOW; the change is even difficult to detect.)

I chose the automatic version and my experience has been that, even when passing through the shadow of a single utility pole at about 35 mph, there is sufficient change to switch the shield from dark to light and back to dark in real time. What's really great is that this speed prevents the pupils of the eyes from needing to respond much—if at all—to the change in light intensity.

More on the e-Tint Liquid Crystal Motorcycle Visor Insert

The insert, made in the U.S.A., comes well-packaged and with easy-to-understand installation instructions. The brief rundown is this: First you thoroughly clean the face shield then, with the helmet on your head, you place an

alignment film on the outside of the shield (the film has a "cross-hair" pattern that needs to be positioned where you look through the shield).

Next, you remove the helmet and remove the helmet's face shield then carefully attach the insert to the *inside* of the shield (lining up the cross-hair on the insert with the one on the shield). Finally, you remove both cross-hair films, install the shield to the helmet, and it's ready to use. (The insert attaches using a narrow strip of double-sided tape and it appears to me that, if done carefully, it can even be removed again for installation on another face shield if necessary.)

As noted, there are two modes of operation: For manual, it's a simple press on/press off; for automatic, you simply hold the button for three seconds (when enough light hits the sensor, it will go dark or light automatically). The insert even has a preset light threshold that can be manually changed and easily switched back to the factory setting.

To charge the battery, simply use the provided USB cable to plug the helmet into your computer (no AC adapter is provided but any nearby computer will do). The insert will blink off and on to indicate charging and remain clear when finished.

According to the manufacturer, "In the light state (off), the visor battery will remain charged approximately one week. In the dark state (on), it will remain charged for about 60 hours". I found that, when totally drained, the battery recharges in about 90 minutes.

The Bottom Line

I recently "topped off" the charge and headed to Wing Ding 33. After 4,000 miles—including meeting up with fellow Chapter Members to ride Skyline Drive, the Blue Ridge Parkway and more—the insert was still working fine.

I'll admit that when I first saw the product, I was concerned how the lower portion would impact my view through the shield. However, it didn't bother me at all and there were times I even raised the shield so that a portion of the insert blocked the sun when it was low in the sky.

If I were going to be on the open road for hours on end, I might not feel a need to use the insert much. But I feel that, when out riding twisting wooded roads, the e-Tint is the only way to go.

MSRP of automatic model is \$149.99 plus S&H; manual model is \$129.99 plus S&H (90-day warranty). For more information, to watch their videos or to place an order, visit e-Tintproducts.com. ●