

Light & Motion Sola 4000

By Peter Rowlands

As with all emerging technologies, specifications improve year on year and this is certainly true with LED lights and especially so for video lights where wide angle coverage and power are desirable.

The invention of LEDs (light emitting diodes) promised to eclipse traditional methods of lighting such as halogen and HID bulbs but the journey has taken longer than most expected as manufacturers had to solve the problems that needed to be overcome, mainly in the heat dissipation department.

West coast of America manufacturer Light & Motion have been at the leading edge of underwater lighting (and also bike lighting, as it happens) for decades and their Sola 4000 represents the widest and brightest handheld LED light on the market today. This development follows the Sola 600 and 1200 which, in a very short space of time, have become the lights of choice with underwater photographers, mainly as spotting/aiming lights.

The Sola 4000 is testament to the fact that LED output has come of age for filming and we are lucky that we

operate underwater where is an almost infinite source of heat sync – water – to dissipate the heat generated by this small 16 bulb array. The generation of such heat creates problems on land and the Sola 4000 should ideally not be used on land or, if important to check it, only for a very few seconds indeed. They generate that much heat that the LED array could be damaged. Indeed if one was left on on land there is a strong possibility that it could cause a fire.

With that in mind, Light and Motion have gone to significant lengths to build in not one, nor two but actually three safety devices to eliminate the possibility of any potential problems, especially in the baggage compartment of an aeroplane. Indeed the Sola 4000 is designed to be disassembled for air transport so that the battery pack is totally isolated from the light array.

Charging a Sola 4000 is simplicity itself with the multi voltage fast 5 amp charger. The 4000 has two through hull bulkhead contacts with a polarity pin for safety so no disassembly is needed. Once the 6 cell Li-ion battery is fully charged the rear



The majority of the blue aluminium front plate is milled for maximum surface contact to give improved cooling.

Once the 48.8 Li-ion battery pack is fully charged all the LED lights turn green.





With the front retaining ring unscrewed, the LED array plate can be removed, turned round and the retaining ring screwed back again for safe flying.



Before diving, turn the top switch 90° anticlockwise so that it is pointing at the diver decal and the lower switch 90° to unlock it. Slide the switch fully forward to activate the light and toggle this to go up or down the 7 available power settings. To turn the light off pull the switch fully back and hold for 3 seconds.

LED array goes fully green and you have 7 levels of light output available to give a burn time varying from 240 minutes down to 60 minutes.

The Sola 4000 has a chunky feel to it being 85mm in diameter and 140mm long and there is provision for either a 1" ball adaptor or LocLine knuckle in the base of the light. I was loaned a beta light and underwater it is all but neutral and the quality

of light output is super smooth with enough power to act as very useful fill in with wide lenses and more than enough power to make you stop down your lens for macro shots. The Sola 4000 is operable to 300ft (90 metres).

At \$1599 no one can claim that the Sola 4000 is cheap but you are getting top of the line lighting in a neat, self contained, unit. It is the sort of light that will repay you every

time you use it for it will improve the quality of your images beyond recognition. If you are serious about your filming, the Sola 4000 will be seriously good for you.

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