



INSTITUTE

THE SUREFIRE DG PRESSURE SWITCH

I feel compelled to respond to the recent postings, in response to Bill Lewinski's newsletter, which appeared in Force Science regarding the SureFire "DG Pressure Switch."

Although I am a consultant for SureFire, I feel compelled to respond as a police officer of 31 years, a Gunsite Academy Rangemaster, the owner of Firearms Training Associates and the SureFire Insitute and a Police Academy Instructor for over twenty years. In my capacity as police officer, I spent most of my career working graveyards and a member of the SWAT team. I also taught low light tactics and techniques.

My background and training allow me to speak into what Mr. Lewinski has written.

In the past, Mr. Lewinski has prepared decent research that has helped law enforcement. However, this latest piece was based on personal bias and opinion and released for logic we can only guess and I am puzzled by what motivated him. How could he have a credible product opinion based on two newspaper articles in which the officers involved in the shootings could not have commented? The media is notoriously incorrect and often aspires to create controversy to sell a story.

Mr. Lewinski's assertion is that the DG Pressure Switch is an ill-conceived product. The switch was designed by SureFire engineers and members of the elite U.S. Navy Seals Development Group Counter Terrorist Team (former Seal Team 6), hence the designation "DG." It is clearly an excellent design and works perfectly. If the bias was against all pressure switches, then I could rationalize his opinion. Yet, the other pressure switches made by SureFire and Streamlight were not mentioned in his piece.

As a police officer working nights, I have conducted searches of hundreds of buildings with a separate flashlight and pistol. This approach is much more difficult to open doors and negotiate obstacles, while maintaining the ability to see and shoot effectively. It took a great deal of practice and proper training to improve my skill until I was good with both, but quality training is what gave me the edge.

Mr. Lewinski's assertion that training cannot overcome response does not make sense at any level. How does a skydiver having a main chute malfunction transition to his reserve, while falling at over 100 mph? Training! I have been involved as a trainer for over twenty years and have taught many police officers, SOCOM personnel, civilians, and regular military how to handle weapons. Re-gripping a weapon, changing hand position or switching hands does not activate a trigger. Firearms do not discharge unless someone puts a finger on a trigger! If a person's trigger finger is straight along the upper frame or slide, it cannot be pulled back on the trigger, as we teach in inter limb interaction avoidance.

It is very possible that slips-and-capture occurred in the 2009 BART Officer accidental shooting. He was trained to draw his weapon thousands of times, but was only recently trained on the Taser. He reached for the Taser and went for the weapon he carried daily and that grab was based on limited exposure to drawing the less lethal Taser.

The officers searching had weapons in hand with flashlights on them. The only movement necessary to activate the light is to apply gentle pressure in order to tighten the user's grip on the weapon. The trigger of the firearm is not involved. I have personally supervised thousands of DG Pressure Switches used during classes and training exercises and none have ever been the cause of an accidental discharge, because users do not put their finger on the trigger. None of the components of the switch force the user to put their finger on the trigger.

I was not at either shooting and would not pass judgment without reading the police reports and conducting interviews. During building searching training, I force startle response stimulation with marking cartridges. I have role player's pop into situations to cause shock, awe, and fear. By creating situations very close to real shooting incidents students discharge weapons out of a startle response, not from slips-and-captures. They put their finger on the trigger and pull them! This type of training reduces the chance of repeating the mistake in real situations.

Mr. Lewinski wants the DG Pressure Switches removed and the toggle switch in front of the trigger guard used. This system puts the support hand thumb on the trigger guard, while moving in an up and down or straightforward movement. If the trigger finger is used, there is a greater chance of moving into the trigger guard. All pressure switches are behind the trigger, with reduced chance of trigger activation.

In Mr. Lewinski's world no one can safely drive a car or own a firearm without discharging it. Most people do these activities daily without incident and will continue to do so. Accidents do happen, but training and proficiency reduce the likelihood significantly.

PhD's have helped law enforcement in many ways, but after a short period of time some believe that they know better than 20 and 30-year subject matter experts, even though they have not trained or performed in the arena. If they trained for twenty years and came to the conclusion I would accept their findings. A uniformed opinion is just that, an opinion.

SureFire weapon mounted lights save officers' lives by allowing them to determine threats quickly and saves citizens' lives by greatly reducing the change of incorrect information accidental shootings. By illuminating the suspect and using the light as a force option, we are able to obtain control. I always recommend the use of hand held flashlights in conjunction to weapon mounted lights when searching or confronting suspects. The most accurate firing of the weapon during low light incidents is a two handed shooting technique using the DG pressure switch for illumination.

I would respectfully invite Mr. Lewinski to visit my training facility whereby he can re-evaluate the article he wrote respecting the SureFire DG Pressure Switch.

Bill Murphy