

not cleaned or given any other maintenance again until the test was complete. This was primarily to test for functional reliability. We are happy to report that all the guns came through this with high marks.

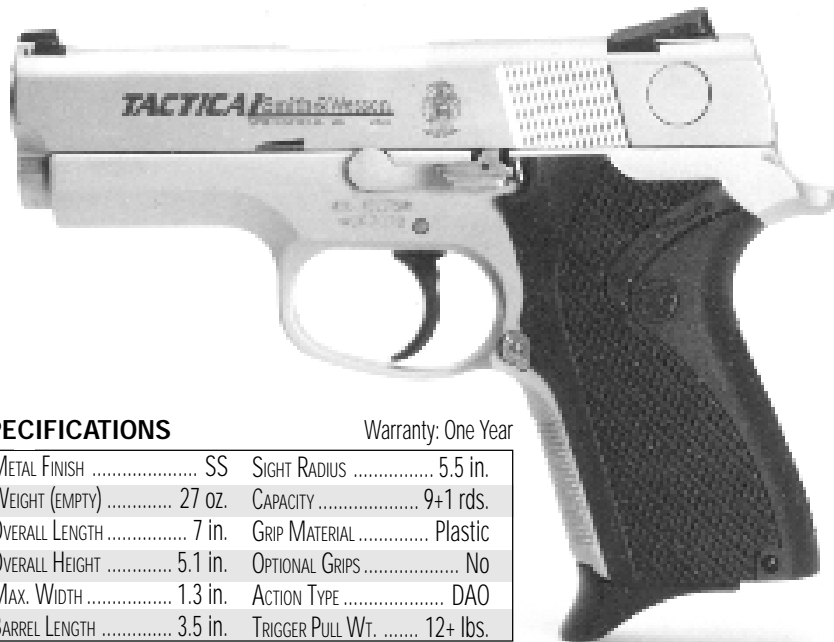
Even though we fired hundreds of rounds through each of the handguns, we encountered only one failure. The Ruger failed to feed a round of Hornady Vector ammo, jamming the gun with a stovepipe. We were unable to determine the cause of the failure, nor were we able to duplicate the failure. We considered it statistically and functionally irrelevant.

Initially, we sought to challenge the guns in a test of pure accuracy by placing targets at 25 yards and shooting five five-shot groups from a bench rest. We chose this distance to ensure we touched the limitations of each gun. For speed tests, we also fired all the guns at paper targets designed to represent an 8-inch plate rack at 10 yards, recording elapsed times. Our accuracy and time-trial testing revealed serious flaws—and strengths—of the action types and individual guns. Groups were measured center to center of the greatest spread. There was some inconsistency with all the guns. Some groups were small while others were large, even while using the same ammo.

It should be noted that the number-one priority in any defensive gun is reliability. These guns are not designed for target use or for hunting. While target shooting may allow an alibi round, combat shooting doesn't allow do-overs. Therefore, a self-defense gun must be functionally reliable. Slightly larger tolerances with all moving parts will ensure more reliability, but at a cost of precision. As a result, accuracy will suffer. Any self-defense action is likely to occur at close range, particularly when civilians rather than law-enforcement officers are involved, so target accuracy is not a prerequisite.

This tolerance of lesser accuracy has its reasonable limits. Obvi-

**S&W 4053TSW .40 S&W** Retail Price...\$781



**SPECIFICATIONS**

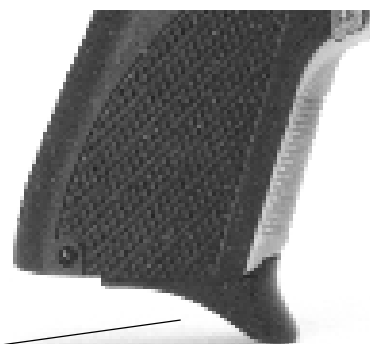
Warranty: One Year

|                      |         |                       |          |
|----------------------|---------|-----------------------|----------|
| METAL FINISH .....   | SS      | SIGHT RADIUS .....    | 5.5 in.  |
| WEIGHT (EMPTY) ..... | 27 oz.  | CAPACITY .....        | 9+1 rds. |
| OVERALL LENGTH ..... | 7 in.   | GRIP MATERIAL .....   | Plastic  |
| OVERALL HEIGHT ..... | 5.1 in. | OPTIONAL GRIPS .....  | No       |
| MAX. WIDTH .....     | 1.3 in. | ACTION TYPE .....     | DAO      |
| BARREL LENGTH .....  | 3.5 in. | TRIGGER PULL WT. .... | 12+ lbs. |

**Our recommendation: This \$781 gun has too high an MSRP for a pistol that may need a new crown and action work.**



*We believe the Smith needs a new crown. It was the least accurate gun in this evaluation.*



*A polymer base pad provides a forward protruding lip that lengthens the front strap by 0.6 inch and completes the grip frame. But without this base pad, the grip is too short and the gun is out of balance, in our view.*

ously, a shooter must be able to keep all his shots within the established kill-zone of an attacker. Any gun that sprays bullets all around the target is as dangerous for a defense choice as one that fails to function. Many feel that an accuracy standard of 5 inches at 25 yards is acceptable for defense

handguns, but we believe that an average of 3 inches at 25 yards is a better standard.

Here's how the guns performed under these conditions.

**S&W 4053 Tactical**

**Our recommendation: This**