



Shine On: The Lumicycle 9038 Octolite System

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With the mostly dark UK winter days, autumn, spring, summer.....(well, we do have pretty grim weather over here in Wales), I needed a good quality, long-lasting lighting system for our bike team. I was fortunate enough to have the Police 9038 Octolite System supplied to me by the UK distributor Lumicycle. At £400 (about \$800), it is not cheap, but for the price you do get a very well put together piece of kit which includes:

- Five-watt spot halogen headlight with glow ring
- Twelve-watt spot halogen headlight with glow ring
- Flashing blue LED lamp X 2
- Control unit with horn/siren, control switch and fuel gauge
- Red LED taillight with incorporated flashing blue LEDs
- NiMH 4 Amp/hour bottle battery
- Intelligent fast charger

Going back to our dark days and, in fact, bright sunny days, the LED is incredibly bright and certainly attracts pedestrians' attention. Compared to other blue light sets I have used previously, the LED's will light up any vehicle I choose to do a stop check on. I have used my bike to cover the scene of a RTC (Road Traffic Collision), to lead parades through the city centre and respond to 999 calls as quickly and safely as possible. Each time I have never been let down by the kit.

The siren is incredibly loud for a small speaker, this incidentally also has a "beep, beep" feature which turns heads quicker than my little bell ever did. In the noise of the city streets it still manages to get heard above the vehicles and screaming kids!

At the rear of the bike is the obligatory red light which again is part of the Octolite system, throwing out a very bright pattern of red light. This also has built-in blue flashing LED's which, as the front, are again very bright, enhancing the user's safety and warning off vehicles that may be travelling too close.

There are also twin halogen headlights (you can upgrade to metal halide lights) which can be used independently, having an excellent light pattern and increasing the rider's visibility from the side thanks to the glow ring feature. It is also possible to use the lights as just "running lights" by flicking the switch, reducing the light output. I don't do this; as far as I am concerned I want to be seen easily and as quickly as possible, but it is another feature anyway.

Furthermore the system is flexible in that you can just use the blues, blues and twos, or full emergency response with all lights on and sirens blaring, meeting any requirements for the call with which you may be dealing. A great energy saver, particularly if you are spending the majority of the shift in the saddle, is the ability to use just one headlight. A clever feature with these lights is when you flick the switch to the 999 (immediate response) position, you get the blues, the twos, and flashing headlights, leaving you to concentrate on getting to your destination safely and quickly. And, believe me you – people, cyclists and vehicles alike will notice you and will clear the way the majority of the time.

A great feature I found of this system is the quick intelligent recharge facility. This is ideal if you don't actually empty the battery of charge all the time. It has no memory so will give a full charge every time,



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taking 2-6 hours to be fully charged. Because it is a NiMH (Nickel-Metal Hydride for the techs), the charge time is less but gives high usage time, which is the ideal solution for the weather we get in Wales!

The battery is the “water bottle type” so you really do need two bottle cages unless you use a Camelbak type or bladder back pack. The weight of the battery pack is not noticeable and I found that the cables, although initially fiddly to connect, did not interfere with the safe use of my bike. If, however, you do get the odd errand cable, the cyclist’s essential friend – the zip tie/cable tie – works perfectly.

So, to round up, this system is superb and is probably one of the best emergency use kits on the market. Although saying that, it would be nice for the price to be a little cheaper. I have used the kit in all weather conditions and have found the casing has never suffered from any water leakage in the rain and is bright in the odd nice days we do get. From a personal point of view, I would recommend the user to fit an extension bar to your handlebars as you will see in the picture it is quite a big piece of kit but once fitted you don’t get any problems. It looks the part and it does the job brilliantly.

Thanks to <http://www.lumicycle.com/> for borrowing one of their photographs and some of their technical info.

Gerard joined South Wales Police in January 1991, and has 17 years service in frontline policing. He started using police bikes in 1996, as a community beat officer in a rural area. He joined IPMBA in 2004 after completing the Police Cyclist Course in York. He has been working in the capital of Wales, Cardiff, since 2005. He can be reached at Gerard.Morgan@south-wales.pnn.police.uk.

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