

Topeak MTX Trunk Bag with Quick Release Beam Rack and Dual Side Frame

by David Sturman

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One of the things I pride myself on being a bike officer is the fact that I can handle almost any kind of call that my carbound cohorts can. This has largely been thanks to my idea of zip-tying a pannier to the left side of my bike just below my JANND bag. The pannier allowed me to add clipboards and forms to my ensemble, but it was awkward in general and sometimes unstable when negotiating stairs.

I'm happy to say that the above apparatus is now collecting dust in the department's bike patrol locker as I have been given the opportunity to experiment with Topeak's MTX Trunk Bag DX (\$87.97). This roomy hauler of gear works fluidly with the available Quick Release Rack (\$47.95) and optional Dual Side Frame (\$21.95) for the bag's built-in panniers. All three items were submitted for evaluation by Todson, Inc., located in Foxborough, Massachusetts.

I installed the quick release "QR" Beam Rack MTX V-Type with little effort and without tools. Unfortunately, the rack could potentially be stolen with little effort and without tools as well. The rack attaches to the bike seat post with a quick release that stayed secure through all my test riding. The MTX Trunk Bag I tested slid easily onto and locked in place on this rack. Removal was the opposite. Once snapped in place, the bag stayed on the frame with no problems.

The rack comes equipped with two bungee straps and a rear reflector that was easily removed. While Topeak offers a variety of rear lights for the rack, there was enough space for me to rig my existing light to the frame.

The Dual Side Frame installed easily – four bolts are all it took to connect the Dual Side Frame to the rack and I was done. It did require a 4mm hex key for installation onto the rack, but any good bike bag has one in it anyway. The rack only accommodates twenty pounds of weight. This changed my style of descending down stairs a bit as I could not "sit" on my bag as I could with my prior frame.

The MTX Trunk Bag DX has a professional look and came equipped with removable Velcro "POLICE" tabs. I also really liked the solid look of the bag's walls; it did not appear that they would collapse when empty as some cheaper bags do. The bag I tested had more space than my JANND bag and contained built-in panniers hidden in the side pockets. If you don't plan to use panniers all the time, get the Trunk Bag of your choice without panniers because they take up most of the room in the bag's side pockets when not in use. I really liked the pocket inserts under the top layer of the bag that held extra hand cuffs, pens, police stickers and more. The bag also expands as most bags do and has a bonus water bottle holder in the rear. This could come in handy if you need to transport an open container of beer for evidence!

For more information or to order these products, contact Chris Harvey of Todson, Inc., at (800) 213-4561 or email charvey@todson.com.

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