

The Sekonic L-398 as a Reflective Meter

The Sekonic L-398 meter was originally designed to read incident light. In order to convert it to use for reflected light some adaptations had to be made. First the designer had to calculate some mathematical differences between measuring light intensity using the two methods. Secondly an accessory had to be designed which would reduce the light falling on the light sensitive cell by the proper amount.

This accessory is the Lumi-grid. It is designed with a series of holes in it which admit only part of the light falling upon it.

To use the meter as a reflective one:

1. Remove the dome and install the Lumi-grid.
2. Remove the High slide.
 - a. Be careful to store the High slide in its appropriate pocket on the back of the meter.
3. Set the correct EI in the ASA/ISO window.
4. Direct the meter at the part of the subject which you wish to be on Zone III and note the luminance number to which the meter points on the scale.
 - a. Note that each number indicates one stop more or less than its neighbor.
5. Set the \square • opposite the selected number on the rotating scale.
 - a. The \square • is black and is the High reading.
 - b. Some models marked this with a RED \square • and the word High .
6. Along the bottom of the rotating scale will be a series of equivalent exposures.
 - a. Choose the combination which is most appropriate to the image you are making with regard to depth of field, etc.
7. Since you are reading for Zone III, and the meter reads at Zone V, it is necessary to give two stops less exposure than indicated.
 - a. Example: if your reading is 1/60 sec. @ ' 16, use either 1/60 sec. @ ' 32, OR 1/250 @ ' 16.

Alternate (Better) method for steps 5 - 7.

- 5A. Set the \square • on the number two (2) full steps to the right of the number indicated.
- 6A. The scales along the bottom will indicate a series of exposures which are correct for placing the area read on Zone III without further adjustment.

The meter may also be used to read the bright areas to determine what Zone they will fall on with normal development. To do this:

8. With the Lumi-disc still in the meter, aim the cell at the part of the scene which you determine to be the brightest with texture (Zone VIII).
9. Note the luminance number indicated by the meter. If it is three to the right of the original reading, the area will be on Zone VIII.
 - a. If only two stops, the area will fall on Zone VII.
 - b. If four stops, the area will fall on Zone IX.
10. Experienced photographers use this information to alter their development to produce the desired tonal range in their negatives.