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#### Sekonic 401-399

# Sekonic L-398A Light Meter Studio Deluxe III Instruction Manual

Model: 401-399

# 1. PRODUCT OVERVIEW

The Sekonic L-398A Studio Deluxe III is an analog light meter designed for precise exposure measurements in both still photography and cinematography. It builds upon the legacy of its predecessors, offering reliable accuracy without the need for batteries, thanks to its environmentally-friendly amorphous silicon photocell.

This meter provides instant readings of aperture and shutter speed combinations, making it a versatile tool for photographers and cinematographers alike. Its robust design and intuitive operation ensure consistent performance in various lighting conditions.





Figure 1.1: Front view of the Sekonic L-398A Light Meter Studio Deluxe III, showing the Lumisphere and the exposure dial.

# 2. KEY FEATURES

- **Instant Exposure Readings:** Provides a full range of aperture and shutter speed combinations at a glance for both still and cine applications. The analog needle indicates brightness in foot-candles.
- Battery-Free Operation: Utilizes an amorphous photosensor that generates its own energy, eliminating the need for batteries.
- **Swivel Head:** The receptor head can rotate 90° to the right and 180° to the left, allowing for optimal positioning of the incident dome while maintaining a clear view of the display. This feature is useful for "walking the set" to check light levels.
- Continuous Reading with Needle Lock: Press and hold the measuring button for continuous readings. Releasing the button locks the analog needle in place for easy exposure calculation.
- Interchangeable Receptors:

- Lumisphere: For incident light readings of three-dimensional objects.
- Lumidisc: For selective area readings, measuring lighting ratios, or light falling on flat-field objects like artwork or green-screens.
- Lumigrid: Replaces the Lumisphere for reflected light readings from the camera position.
- **Memory Pointer:** Allows alignment with the analog needle to transfer brightness readings to the exposure dial, facilitating comparison of light ratios.

# 3. COMPONENTS AND ACCESSORIES

The Sekonic L-398A Studio Deluxe III comes with the following standard components and accessories:

- Sekonic L-398A Light Meter Unit
- Lumisphere (attached)
- Lumidisc
- Lumigrid
- · High-slide
- Protective Case
- Neck Cord

An optional Slide Set (Direct Reading Slides) is available separately for adjusting the meter's reading range for bright subjects and for faster readings in specific scenarios.





Figure 3.1: The Sekonic L-398A with its standard Lumisphere attached, ready for incident light measurement.

# 4. SETUP

The L-398A is designed for immediate use as it does not require batteries. Before taking measurements, ensure the appropriate light receptor is attached for your desired measurement type.

# 1. Attaching the Lumisphere/Lumidisc/Lumigrid:

- For incident light readings, ensure the *Lumisphere* is securely attached. This is the standard dome-shaped receptor.
- To measure light falling on flat surfaces or for contrast readings, carefully replace the Lumisphere with the *Lumidisc*.
- For reflected light readings, remove the Lumisphere and attach the Lumigrid.
- 2. **Setting ISO:** Rotate the outer dial to align your film speed (ISO) with the indicator mark. This sets the meter for the sensitivity of your film or digital sensor.



Figure 4.1: Detail of the exposure dial, highlighting the ISO setting area.

# 5. OPERATING INSTRUCTIONS

# 5.1 Incident Light Measurement (Using Lumisphere or Lumidisc)

- 1. Ensure the Lumisphere (for 3D objects) or Lumidisc (for flat surfaces/contrast) is attached.
- 2. Position the meter at the subject's position, pointing the Lumisphere/Lumidisc towards the camera or light source, depending on the desired measurement.
- 3. Press and hold the measuring button. The analog needle will move to indicate the brightness level.
- 4. Release the button to lock the needle in place.
- 5. Read the exposure values (aperture and shutter speed combinations) directly from the dial where the needle aligns.

# 5.2 Reflected Light Measurement (Using Lumigrid)

- 1. Replace the Lumisphere with the Lumigrid.
- 2. Position yourself at the camera's position and point the Lumigrid towards the subject area you wish to measure.
- 3. Press and hold the measuring button. The analog needle will indicate the brightness.
- 4. Release the button to lock the needle.
- 5. Read the exposure values from the dial.







Figure 5.1: The Sekonic L-398A with the Lumigrid attached for reflected light readings.

# 6. MAINTENANCE

The Sekonic L-398A is a durable and low-maintenance device due to its battery-free design. Follow these guidelines to ensure its longevity and accurate performance:

- Cleaning: Use a soft, dry cloth to wipe the meter's body and the light receptors. Avoid using abrasive cleaners or solvents, which can damage the surfaces.
- **Storage:** Store the meter in its protective case when not in use to prevent dust accumulation and physical damage. Keep it in a cool, dry place away from direct sunlight and extreme temperatures.
- **Handling:** While robust, avoid dropping the meter or subjecting it to strong impacts, as this can affect the delicate internal mechanisms and the analog needle.
- Receptor Care: Handle the Lumisphere, Lumidisc, and Lumigrid carefully to avoid scratches or damage to their light-gathering surfaces.

# 7. TROUBLESHOOTING

The Sekonic L-398A is a highly reliable analog device. Most issues are related to improper use or physical damage. Consider the following if you encounter problems:

#### • No Needle Movement:

- Ensure there is sufficient light. The meter's measuring range starts at EV 4 at ISO 100 for incident light. In very low light conditions, the needle may not move significantly.
- Check if the measuring button is fully depressed.
- Inspect the light receptor (Lumisphere, Lumidisc, or Lumigrid) for any obstructions or damage.
- If the meter has been subjected to severe impact, internal damage to the photocell or needle mechanism may have occurred.

#### • Inaccurate Readings:

- Verify that the correct ISO setting is selected on the dial.
- Ensure the correct light receptor is being used for the measurement type (Lumisphere/Lumidisc for incident, Lumigrid for reflected).
- Confirm the meter is positioned correctly relative to the subject and light source for the chosen measurement method.
- Compare readings with a known reliable light source or another calibrated meter if available. Significant discrepancies may indicate a need for professional calibration.

#### · Stuck or Jerky Needle:

- This often indicates physical damage or debris interfering with the needle's movement. Avoid forcing the needle.
- If the issue persists, contact Sekonic customer support for repair options.

# 8. TECHNICAL SPECIFICATIONS

Feature	Specification
Туре	Analog exposure meter for ambient light
Receptor Head	Rotating Domed Head (90° right, 180° left), Removable for Contrast Reading
Light Receiving Method	Incident light and reflected light
Receptor Incident Light	Interchangeable Lumisphere and Lumidisc
Receptor Reflected Light	Interchangeable Lumigrid
Light Receptor Element	Amorphous silicon photocell
Measuring Modes Ambient Light	Aperture priority metering, EV metering, Shutter priority metering
Measuring Range (ISO 100) Incident Light	EV 4 to EV 17
Measuring Range (ISO 100) Reflected Light	EV 9 to EV 17
Repeat Accuracy	(+/-) 0.3 EV or less
Calibration Constant Incident (Lumisphere)	C = 340
Calibration Constant Reflected	K = 12.5
Film Speed Range	ISO 6 to 12000 (in 1/3 steps)
Shutter Speeds Ambient Display Range	60 min to 1/8000 sec. (in 1, 1/2, 1/3 steps)
Aperture Display Range	f/0.7 to f/128.0 (in 1, 1/2, 1/3 steps)
Cine Speeds fps Display Range	8 fps - 128 fps
Product Dimensions	4.40 x 2.30 x 1.30 in. / 11.20 x 5.80 x 3.30 cm
Product Weight	0.40 lbs. / 0.20 kg.
Power Source	Self-powered: Selenium photocell (no batteries required)

# 9. WARRANTY AND SUPPORT

For information regarding warranty coverage, service, or technical support for your Sekonic L-398A Light Meter, please refer to the official Sekonic website or contact Sekonic customer service directly.

Please note that the product description states "No refund or Exchange. Brand new in box." for certain purchase conditions. Always verify return and warranty policies with your retailer at the time of purchase.

You can find more information and support resources on the official Sekonic website:www.sekonic.com

#### Related Documents - 401-399



#### Sekonic L-558 / CINE Quick Guide: Features, Settings, and Operation

Comprehensive quick guide for the Sekonic L-558 and L-558 CINE light meters, covering custom settings, basic and advanced operations, and measurement modes for professional photography and videography.



# Sekonic TWINMATE L-208 Light Meter Operating Instructions and Specifications

Comprehensive operating instructions and technical specifications for the Sekonic TWINMATE L-208 analog light meter, covering setup, measurement modes, safety warnings, and device specifications.



#### Sekonic L-256 Flash Meter Instruction Book

This document provides comprehensive instructions for the Sekonic L-256 Flash Meter, covering its features, specifications, operation, and maintenance. It details how to use the meter for incident and reflected light measurements, as well as special applications like slave unit operation and multiple flash illumination.



#### Sekonic SPEEDMASTER L-858D/L-858D-U Light Meter Startup Guide

A concise startup guide for the Sekonic SPEEDMASTER L-858D and L-858D-U light meters, covering included items, parts identification, basic operations, screen navigation, input methods, measuring modes, tool box functions, and custom settings.



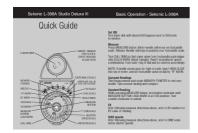
#### Sekonic Litemaster Pro L-478 Series Startup Guide

A startup guide for the Sekonic Litemaster Pro L-478 Series light meter, covering basic operations, included items, parts identification, and setting adjustments.



#### Sekonic L-308X Light Meter Instruction Manual

This document provides comprehensive instructions for operating the Sekonic L-308X light meter, covering its features, functions, and various measurement modes for photography and videography.



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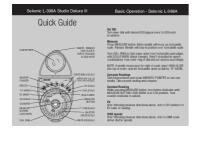
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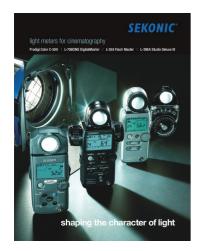
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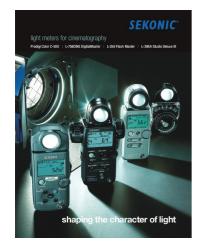


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