

Emerson EVC455 Actioncam HD

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EMERSON'S ACTIONCAM 720P HD DIGI-tal video camera promises decent recording performance on a shoestring budget for riders willing to sacrifice some degree of quality and performance in exchange for a much lower price than premium cameras like GoPro. So, how does it stack up?

The camera itself arrives with plenty of accessories for adventure travel, including a waterproof case and two camera mounts (for bicycle helmets and 7/8 inch handlebars.) For a motorcycle helmet, any generic "suction cup" type mount will suffice. The Actioncam delivers 720 pixel resolution (1280x720) with a 16:9 aspect ratio and 5MP still capability with 4x digital zoom. On the camera's rear side, a 2 inch color display allows aiming and menu toggling functionality. An integrated microphone is included, along with a USB cable to allow charging of the internal Li-Ion battery. Memory is provided via a Class 4 Micro-SD card (up to 32GB) which is not included.

The hardware itself is about what you'd expect for this price, namely flimsy and plastic, though by no means disappointingly so. Controls are intuitive and very easy to operate on the fly. A two-position toggle switch on the side of the camera allows switching between photo, video or playback modes, with a decent amount of adjustability in each mode, including fine tuning of frame rate, metering, white balance, and other parameters. Power and shutter controls are on top of the camera body.

Functionally, once mounted, the picture is good considering the price. There is no noticeable image stabilization, so motion videos can be shaky at times. The field captured by the lens is quite narrow, about half as wide as a standard wide-angle lens on most cameras. There is some slightly

noticeable distortion (fish eye) if used within the waterproof case, but nothing too serious. The microphone inlet is a tiny hole on the rear of the camera unit. Sound quality is fairly dismal, and if the camera is mounted within the waterproof case, the microphone is covered, and virtually no sound is recorded.

For reference, on a 720p setting, we captured 50 minutes of video with an 8GB Micro SD card. Readers interested in seeing objective video samples will find no shortage on Youtube. Some videos look much better than others, indicating that playing with the settings and adjusting properly pays dividends in quality recording.

And now for the biggest selling point: Price. The Emerson EVC455 Actioncam can be had at any number of online discount retailers for about \$40, not including the micro SD card – or less than 20 percent of the high-end GoPro cameras. For those riders who only need light-duty recording of the occasional adventure, this camera provides all the tools required for the job, and at a substantial savings. And for the really rough



stuff that's not going to be professionally shot, it's better to accidentally drop a \$40 camera in the muck than a \$400 one! ☺