

METALSUB TORCHES

Metalsub may be a relatively new name on the UK diving scene, but this Dutch manufacturer has built up a solid reputation in other countries for producing top-end, durable torches made from anodized, marine-grade aluminium. They must be good – they are used around the world by the military, fire departments and police agencies for search and rescue and special operations.

Metalsub Cable Light HID 200 and PR 12085 battery pack

The first thing which hits you about this umbilical torch is the price. At £829 for the Cable Light HID 200 and the PR12085 battery pack, you are not talking about a small amount of cash, but if you are a seasoned UK wreckie or technical diver, then you would be hard-pushed to find an umbilical torch with a beam as bright and penetrating as this one.

The on/off controls on the Cable Light HID 200 are identical to those on the XL7.2, so cold-water divers won't have any trouble turning it on and off even when wearing their thickest gloves. At full power – 50-watts – the HID bulb gives out a white light comparable to a 200-watt halogen bulb, yet you get a burn time of over 110 minutes at full power, and up to 200 minutes on one of the lower settings. Also like the XL7.2, it has an LED on the rear which tells you the level of battery charge – green means 50 per cent, orange 30 per cent, red 20 per cent, and flashing red 10 per cent.

The Cable Light HID 200 is quite a chunky unit, but it nestles comfortably into your hand and has a nice, weighty feel to it. It also has a useful little metal D-ring, which is handy for clipping it securely onto a BCD D-ring when it is not in use either underwater or on the surface.

Our test unit came with the anodised aluminium PR 12085 battery pack, which features a nifty quick-release

system to hold it securely in place on to your cylinder. You can thread your BCD camband through the mounting bracket, and then the battery pack latches on in seconds. The light unit then attaches to the battery pack quickly and easily via a wet connector, so you don't need to be carting around the whole umbilical system when you take the battery for charging. You can unclip the battery, twist and release the Cable Light HID 200 and then you can just take the battery pack back to your digs to charge up. Next morning you do the reverse and you are ready to go.

The Metalsub MP2500 Fast Charger (SRP: £86) can put a full charge into the PR 12085 battery pack in just four hours, and it is multi-voltage, which means you can take it with you when you travel. Like the XL7.2, you do not need to crack open the battery pack to recharge – you just slot the charging plugs into the sockets on the end of the battery unit.

We took this unit into the depths of Stoney Cove, and even down in the dark at 36m, its beam shone brightly and cut through the detritus in the water. As with all HID's, it takes several seconds to achieve full power, but once it warmed up, it pumped out a fantastic focused beam, with a welcoming halo of light spreading out from it.

The battery pack may weigh nearly two kilos underwater, but we didn't find that it pulled us to one side. If you did find yourself out of kilter, you can always just lose a couple of kilos of weight off the opposite side of your weightbelt/weightpocket.

FOR MORE INFORMATION, CONTACT CPS PARTNERSHIP ON 01424 442663 OR CHECK OUT THE WEBSITE: WWW.CPSPARTNERSHIP.CO.UK

