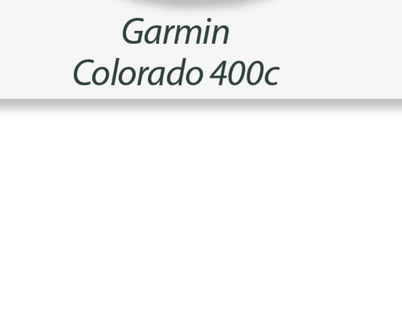
From Gaskets to Display Visibility

To compare ease of use, four users, two relative novices and two experts, used the units for multiple days and commented on key functions such as saving waypoints and plotting routes. A simple battery test was performed with the backlighting on at all times, but turned to the lowest setting.

The waterproofness evaluation mimicked the IPX-7 standard test, which requires that the product survive being submerged for 30 minutes in three feet of water. Each unit was also dropped three feet onto a fiberglass surface on each side. "Cold starts" in multiple locations were performed to compare the time needed to get a satellite fix.

Screen visibility was compared on the water in overcast conditions, bright sunlight, and at night while viewing the display from the sides at roughly a 45-degree angle. Daylight visibility tests were carried out with and without polarized sunglasses.

The Colorado's back gasket (above) became pinched when we closed the battery cover. Background clutter on the Oregon (far right) made its trip computer hard to read. It did not have a "large numbers" option like the other two units.



Garmin Colorado 400c

Garmin GPSMap 76CSx

Garmin Oregon 400c