

Canon and Nikon ...

by Michael Willems

A quick note now on how Canon and Nikon, the two brand leaders, handle flash exposure differently. (Others follow either Canon or Nikon).

Shutter speeds can be restricted by the camera for two reasons:

- ✓ To protect the user from shaky pics, a slow speed is sometimes denied.
- ✓ To prevent bad flash photos, a fast shutter speed is also sometimes denied.

But Canon and Nikon do this differently – and it helps to know how your camera works. So here goes.

SLOW SHUTTER SPEED RESTRICTIONS:

Shutter speed mode:

Canon: None. You set what you like.

Nikon: None. You set what you like.

Manual Mode:

Canon: None. You set what you like.

Nikon: None. You set what you like.

Program Mode:

Canon: no speeds slower than 1/60th second will be used

Nikon: no speeds slower than 1/60th second (adjustable on some cameras) will be used. Except if "Slow Flash" is selected: then, any speed including very slow ones can be chosen by the camera.

Aperture Mode:

Canon: Any speed including very slow ones can be chosen by the camera.

Nikon: no speeds slower than 1/60th second (adjustable on some cameras) will be used. Except if "Slow Flash" is selected: then, any speed including very slow ones can be chosen by the camera.

So there you have it – markedly different behaviour by both cameras.

Clearly, from the above you can see that:

On Canon: Program mode is not ideal when using indoors flash (you might want slower shutter speeds to allow lighter backgrounds)!

Aperture mode is not ideal when using indoors flash (you might get a 1-second shutter if the background is dark, which you do not want!)

On Nikon: Program mode or Aperture mode without "slow flash" enabled are not ideal when using indoors flash (you might want slower shutter speeds to allow lighter backgrounds)!

Program mode or Aperture mode with “slow flash” enabled are not ideal when using indoors flash (you might get a 1-second shutter if the background is dark, which you do not want!)

Which is why I use manual when using flash indoors, when ambient light is low.

FAST SHUTTER SPEED RESTRICTIONS:

Canon: when the flash is detected, no speed faster than the flash sync speed (typically 1/200th second) is allowed, except if “High-Speed Flash” is enabled on the flash. This, however, drastically reduces the maximum available flash range.

Nikon: when the flash is detected, no speed faster than the flash sync speed (typically 1/250th second) is allowed, except if “Auto FP Flash” is enabled in the camera’s flash menu. This, however, drastically reduces the maximum available flash range.