

AccurateShooter.com Bulletin

December 28, 2008

TOOL TIP: Make Your Own Length-To-Lands Gauge

Filed under: Reloading — Editor @ 10 am

To achieve best accuracy with a rifle, you must control bullet seating depth very precisely, so all bullets end up in the same place relative to the entrance of the lands, every time. There may be multiple cartridge OALs which prove accurate. However, with each, you first need to determine a "zero" point — a reliable, and repeatable OAL where the bullet is "just touching" the lands.

There are tools, such as the Hornady (formerly Stoney Point) OAL Gauge, that will help you find a seating OAL just touching the lands. However, the tool requires that you use a special modified case for each cartridge you shoot. And, while we find that the Hornady OAL Gauge is repeatable, it does take some practice to get in right.

Make Your Own Length-to-Lands Gauge with a Dremel

Here's an inexpensive alternative to the Hornady OAL tool — a slotted case. Forum member Andris Silins explains how to create a slotted case to measure length to the lands in your rifle:

"Here's what I did to find length to lands for seating my bullets. I made four cuts into the neck of fire-formed brass. Then I pressed the bullet in lightly and chambered the entire gauge. As the cartridge chambers, the bullet slides back into the case to give you length to lands. It took less than five minutes to get it cut and working. A little light oil in the barrel just past the chamber helps ensure the bullet does not get stuck in the lands. It works great and is very accurate.



I made the cuts using a Dremel with a cut-off wheel. You can adjust tension two ways. First, you can make the cuts longer or shorter. Longer cuts = less tension. If you used only three cuts instead of four you would get more tension. The trick is to be gentle when you open and close the bolt. If you ram the bolt closed you may wedge the bullet into the lands. When you open the bolt it helps to keep a finger or two near by to guide the case out straight because the ejector wants to push it sideways."

Comments (3)

3 Comments »

1.



I have been using this exact method for 35 years. Saw it in an old copy of the American Rifleman. You can also use the bulletted case to set your die seating stem.

Comment by BOB — December 28, 2008 @ 7 pm

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2.

Great idea...I just used it in my .223 14" T/C so now I know exactly where my different bullets touch the lands and how to adjust for the jump I desire. Thanks...I'll use this for all of my calibers !!

Comment by Wm. Weisel — January 2, 2009 @ 2 pm

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3.

I used a Dremel with the cutoff wheel to modify a case this way. I even brushed out the mouth of the case afterward. But I didn't clean out the case too. Stupid! Enough grit was in there to get in the chamber and scratch the case when I was using it. And some seemed to be embedded in the chamber wall, too. Cosmetic only, but still Stupid!

Comment by Mike Knepley — April 11, 2009 @ 8 am

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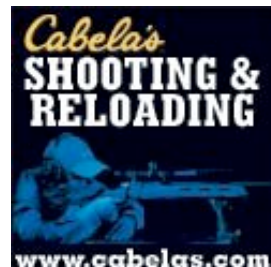
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