

Seating Depth Variation

There are many factors that can contribute to variations in bullet seating depth.

One consideration that many handloaders overlook is variation in bullets themselves. Like all manufactured items, even the best match bullet will exhibit small dimensional differences in length, ogive shape, etc. that affect where the seat stem/ seat plug makes contact with the bullet.

To mitigate the effects of this variation, it is recommended that bullets are sorted for uniformity before they are seated using a comparator that contacts the bullet at or close to the land bearing surface (the point of the bullet that makes initial contact with the rifling). Segregating bullets into similar “groups” can reduce seating depth variation significantly.

Similarly, a comparator can also be used to determine how consistent the Cartridge Overall Length (C.O.A.L) is from the base of the cartridge case to the land bearing point of the bullet.



For information on the Redding Instant Indicator Headspace and Bullet Comparator, please visit our website at www.redding-reloading.com.

Inadequate or excessive neck tension can also cause bullet seating depth variation. If this is suspected, it is recommended that the size button is removed from the die and measured with an accurate micrometer to make sure that it is the correct diameter (slightly under bullet diameter).

If you are using a Bushing Style Sizing Die, make sure that the bushing you have selected is the appropriate size for the brass you are loading. Generally, a bushing that is .002” smaller than the diameter of your loaded round’s neck diameter is an appropriate starting point.

Loads that are heavily compressed often exhibit varying seating depths. This is because the pressure that is exerted on the bullet causes it to be pushed from the case, making that C.O.A.L longer.

Note: that the Competition Seating Die should not be used for compressed loads as it will damage the internal parts of the die.

If you have any questions regarding the above procedures, please contact our tech support members.

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