Casting Powder

Casting Bullets Coatings

Bullet Casting Powder

- According to Jeff "Tank" Hoover from Guns Magazine:
- Powder Coating (PC) is simply the process of treating your cast bullets with a baked-on polymer coating.

Bullet Casting Powder

- This coating acts as the bullets' lubricant as it travels down the bore of your gun. For 25 years I sized/lubed my cast bullets traditionally on an RCBS Lube-A-Matic II. About six years ago I heard about Powder Coated bullets.
- I was perfectly content with sized/lubed bullets, but admit curiosity was tempting me. After thinking it over, I decided to give it a try.

Bullet Casting Powder

- If it was easier than size/lubing my bullets, and if it gave as good, if not better results, I might switch. Long story short: It was faster, and my results were better, so I've been a die-hard convert of PC the past six years .
- For those who regularly pray to the silver stream from the melting pot, there's a fairly new technique that is either loved by some or hated like the plague by others. There appears to be no in-between.

Bullet Casting Powder

- Of course, we're talking about powder coating cast lead alloy bullets. Powder-coated lead bullets have been in the United States for approximately 10 years.

- There's nothing mystical about powder coating. It involves applying polymer, in powder form, to cast bullets through static electricity. The bullets are then baked, melting the powder, encapsulating the lead projectile in a polymer coating. This coating acts as the lube as your bullet travels down the barrel of your gun.

Bullet Casting Powder

- Why would I want to sway away from traditional lube/sizing? Hadn't it worked totally satisfactorily the past 20+ years? I already had my RCBS Lub-A-Matic and all the sizing dies I needed, along with plenty of bullet lube.

- Being recently retired from the police department, I had plenty of time on my hands and decided to experiment with powder coating. I did a simple test by casting a batch of RCBS .32 98 rain SWC bullets. I powder coated half and lube/sized half, both to .314 inches in diameter. I loaded both bullets with the same dies, powder weight and set-up during the same session.

Bullet Casting Powder

- The results were interesting. The powder-coated bullets were slightly faster, more accurate and left my barrel immaculate of any lead residue. There was no sign of it anywhere. The lube/sized loads shot well, just not as accurately, and were slightly slower. My barrel after shooting the lubed bullets showed a slight lead wash. I knew from experience the lead wash would get worse as I continued shooting.

Bullet Casting Powder

By using a brass tumbler, more cast bullets can be easily powder coated to speed up the process.

Bullet Casting Powder

Once bullets are coated, they are dumped into a wire fry basket so excess powder can be shaken off. Then, they are placed on a baking tray with parchment paper.

Bullet Casting Powder

Bullets are baked at 400 degrees for 20 minutes.

Bullet Casting Powder

- Lazy Man Ways
- If you want to know the easy way of doing something, ask a lazy man. I started tumbling my bullets in my brass tumbler. I'd add 500 bullets with a couple teaspoons of powder coat and tumble them for 20 minutes. If more powder was needed, I'd add it. If the bullets were totally coated, I'd stop and dump them in a wire fry basket. Then, I'd shake the excess powder off, collecting it on a newspaper to be reused again.

Bullet Casting Powder

- Then, I baked the bullets at 400 degrees for 20 minutes. I didn't stack my bullets; I dumped them on the tray lined with parchment paper. The bullets broke apart freely from shaking off excess powder. I then sized my bullets with Lee push-through sizing dies. I now use the Lee Automatic Processing Press for sizing, feeling it is the fastest, most economical way of sizing powder-coated bullets.
- I can cast, powder coat and size 500 bullets in about an hour. This is much easier and faster than using traditional lube/size equipment.

Bullet Casting Powder

The Lee Automatic Processing Press is the fastest
and easiest way to size your bullets.

Bullet Casting Powder

- The "Real" Bonuses of Powder Coating
- **Clean Hands/Dies:** Powder-coated bullets are very clean handling. There's no more gunky fingernails, hands and fingers from handling lubed bullets. This also applies to your dies with no lube contamination. There's no need to re-adjust your seating stem as bullets get seated deeper and deeper from residual lube build-up inside the seating die.
- **Clean Barrels:** I have guns I've shot several thousand rounds of powder-coated slugs through without a hint of leading showing. Although lubed bullets weren't too bad, after shooting that many rounds a lead wash would surely ensue. Not so with powder-coated bullets.

Bullet Casting Powder

- **Nix the Oxidation:** If you like casting bullets well in advance like I do, storing them over a long period of time can lead to oxidation — the white crusty stuff that accumulates on lead. When your cast bullets are powder coated, oxidation is a thing of the past.
- **Color Coding:** Ever wonder what load is in your hand when you pluck it from your pocket? It can be the handloaders curse for sure. Fear no more with powder coating. Now you have the option of using different colored coded loads to know at a glance what load is in your hands. Maybe use blue for a cool, light load or red for something hotter? You get the idea.

Bullet Casting Powder

- **Smoke Free:** Powder-coated bullets are smoke free when shooting them. If you use alox-based lubes, this is especially nice as your sinuses won't burn from the residual alox smoke. Dare I say powder-coated bullets are a healthier version to shoot? If your sniffer isn't sucking up noxious vapor, I'd say yes. All I know is my sinuses don't burn when shooting them.
- **Cheaper:** Most handloaders are frugal by nature. It's one of the reasons we started handloading to begin with. A pound of powder coat is enough for several thousand cast bullets. You get a lot more mileage from powder coat than traditional lubes.

Bullet Casting Powder

- **Seat Deeper:** With traditional lubed bullets you must keep seated bullets contained within the neck of the cartridge brass to prevent powder contamination of lube. During hot weather bullet lube melts, contaminating powder. Not so with powder-coated bullets. Seating your bullets as deep as you want makes them more versatile for different loads.
- As you can see there are many reasons to powder coat your cast bullets. I love the advantages and haven't sized/lubed cast bullets in years. I'm not trying to convince anyone to convert to powder-coated bullets, but rather sharing why I chose to do so. I'm sure there's other reasons, but this covers the gist of them.

Bullet Casting Powder

- **There are three common bullet coatings: Molybdenum Disulfide (Moly), Tungsten Disulfide (WS2 or Danzac), and Hexagonal Boron Nitride (HBN or "White Graphite"). All three products have very low coefficients of friction, and, when applied correctly, all three will do the job.**
- Some Brands:
- Hi-Tek 2-Extreme Coating
- Eastwood powders
- Smoke4320

Bullet Casting Powder

Video Link

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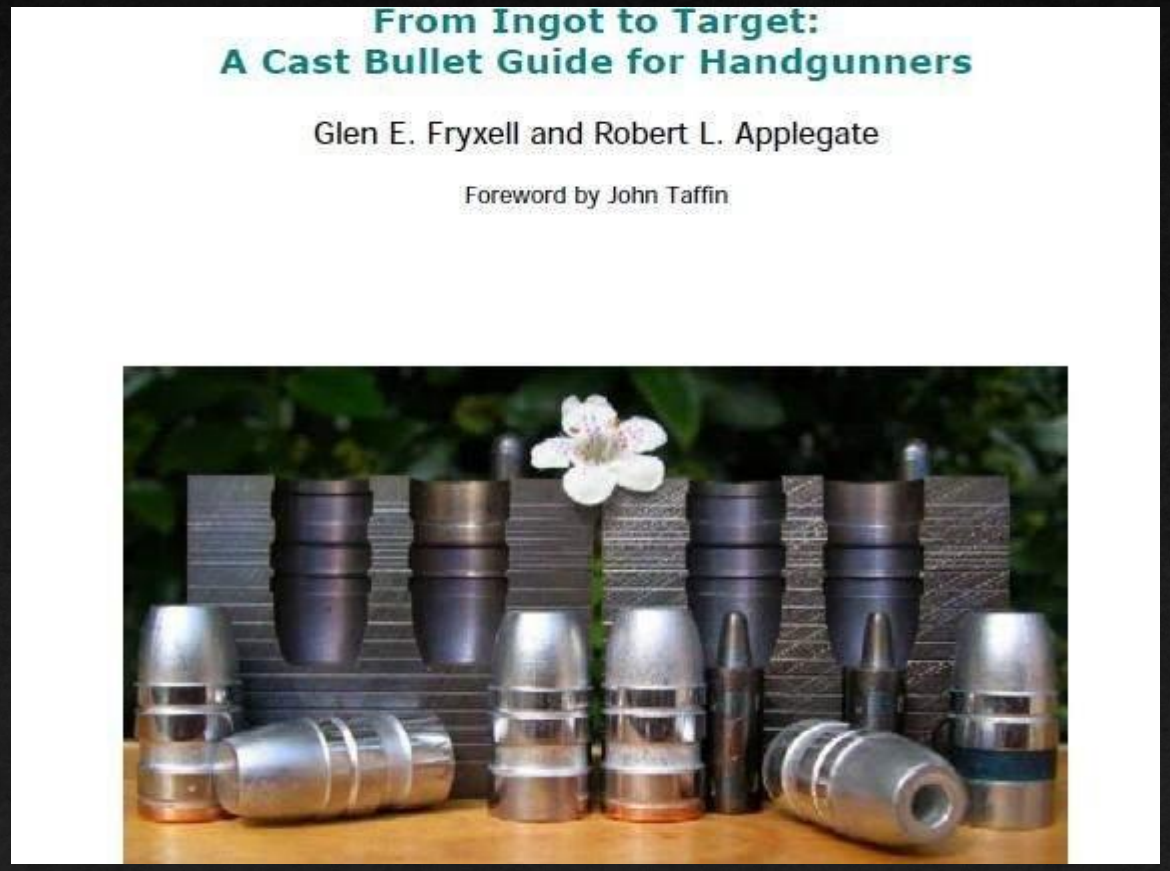
From Ingot to Target: A Cast Bullet Guide for Handgunners



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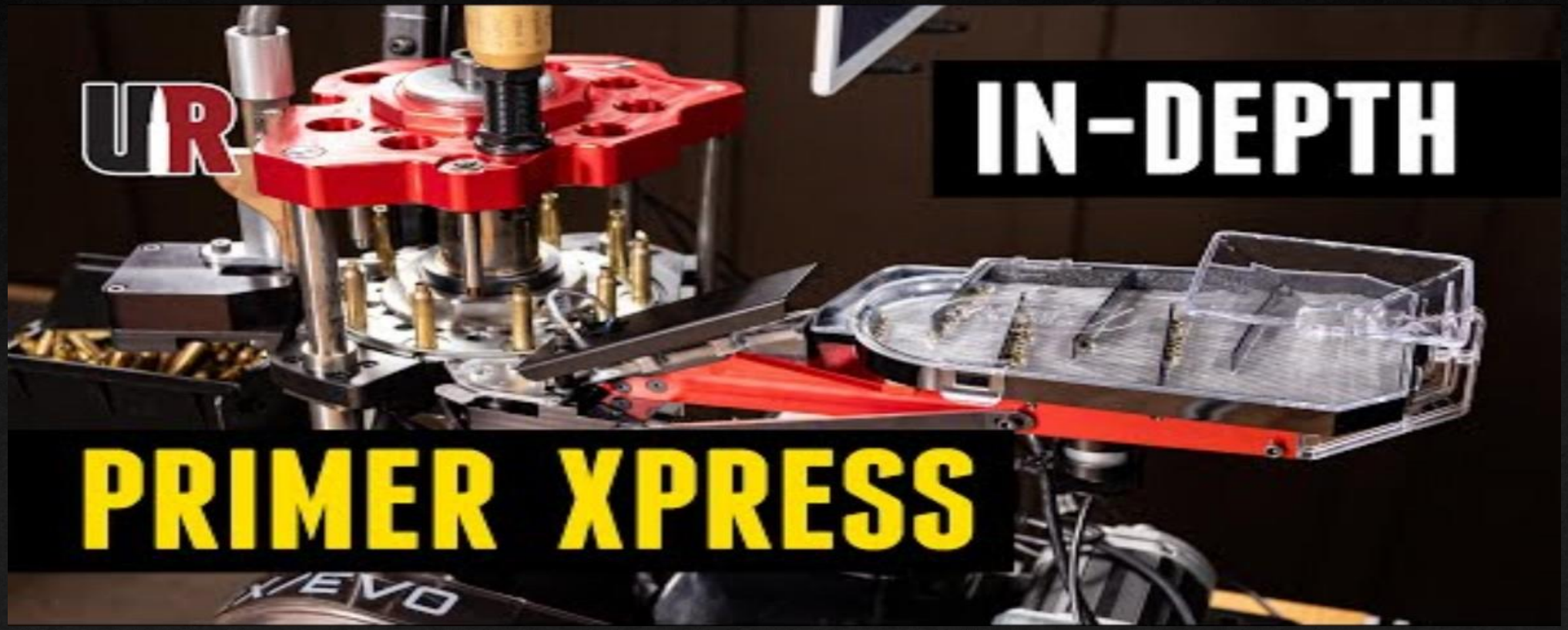

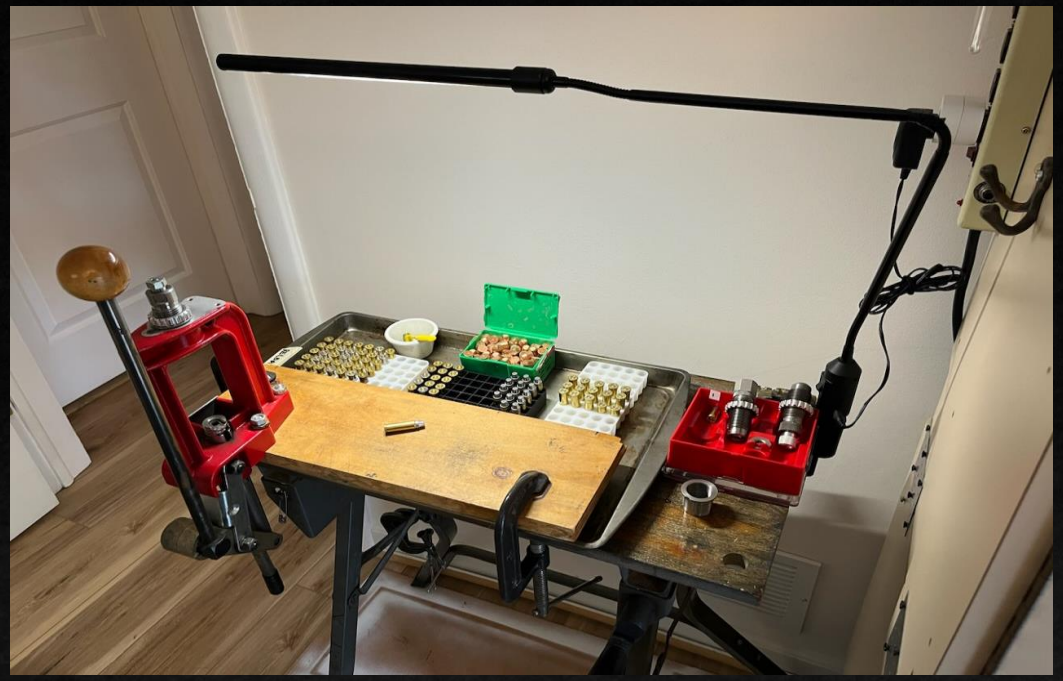

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