

# NON-TOXIC SHOT

## Reloading

### **Can I reload my own non-toxic shotshells?**

Reloading non-toxic shot is easy and follows the same process as reloading lead using the same reloading presses. Bismuth and tungsten polymers will need no adjustments to presses except to change powder and shot bushes as usual for different loads. Make sure you refer to relevant reloading data applicable to the shot type you are reloading. Bismuth and tungsten polymers can be reloaded using current lead shot componentry.

Steel shot needs different combinations of wads, powders and primers. Australian Defence Industries are producing a locally made powder suitable for steel shot reloading.

Because steel shot will not sheer off during a shot-transport jam like lead shot will, a few part changes must be made to most reloading presses.

MEC and Pacific both sell special steel shot bars or bushings with soft rubber inserts next to the shot cavity. This allows the steel pellets to compress into the insert in the event of a bar-transport jam to alleviate any jamming. Steel shot should not be reloaded without these special bars or bushings as damage could result to the press. Most MEC reloaders sold in Australia in the last ten years have these special steel shot charge bars. There is also a Universal Charge Bar available for MEC presses with this same type insert to allow the loading of steel shot.

Some Ponsness-Warren presses are compatible with reloading steel, those that are not can be made compatible. MEC also offers steel shot conversion kits which contain a shot bottle, drop tube and ram tube with enlarged openings to prevent the bridging problems associated with loading pellet sizes larger than No. 4 in lead or steel in MEC presses.

Once installed these conversion parts need not be changed for loading lead shot. MEC offers these kits for both its single stage and progressive line of reloading presses. MEC now also sells presses such as the new MEC Steelmaster, completely set up for lead or steel reloading without any conversions necessary.

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Steel shot reloading is less forgiving of improper reloading practices than lead. That's because steel shot and its attendant wad column is not going to crush and collapse to absorb excess pressure anywhere near as much as lead shot where too much powder and/or shot are used.

Pressures will rise faster and higher from misassembly of steel shot reloads than lead shot reloads. But such pressure excursions are still strictly the fault of the hunter doing the reloading not the component system or steel shot.

If you want to reload steel shot you've got to be willing to follow the recipe to the letter, which is exactly what everyone is supposed to be doing with lead shot anyway. In terms of powder and shot charge latitude, testing indicates that with steel your load is safe provided you are within plus or minus 25 grains of the indicated shot charge and plus or minus ½ grain of the stated powder charge. Every reloading press can be set up and bars or bushings adjusted to give this degree of charging accuracy, so there's no reason everyone can't assemble perfectly safe steel shot reloads if they want to.

**Always consult your reloading manual and never deviate from its listings and never ever mix or substitute components. Consult you gun dealer or ammunition supplier if you are unsure about any aspect of reloading non-toxic shot.**

