

GETTING STARTED

In any case-forming process, there are some common, basic considerations. Always use unfired brass, if possible. If unfired brass is not available, use once-fired brass, but never any that has seen more use. If you are using military brass, you must remove the primer crimp and condition the primer pocket. There are lots of tools on the market to remove the crimp. I prefer one that swages rather than cuts so that no metal is removed. I use a swaging die from RCBS and then condition the primer pocket with the RCBS Trim Mate Case Prep Center. Also you must remember that military brass is usually heavier and has a smaller powder space, so charges must be reduced.

When working and forming brass, you must use a strong press that will not spring under the pressure of use.

The press must also have a good compound linkage system to aid in powering the process. I use the RCBS Rockchucker II press.

You must lubricate all cases carefully, both outside and inside, for forming. However, excessive lubricant must be avoided because it can collect and cause problems with oil dents, or in extreme cases, cause case failure. The most popular way to lubricate brass is to roll the cases on a lubrication pad that has been treated and then to lube the inside case mouths with a brush that has been rolled on the pad. A much easier way is to stand the cases in a loading block and spray them with a spray lubricant, such as RCBS Case Slick or One Shot Case Lube from Hornady. After forming and before loading—and certainly before any fireforming—all lubricant must be removed. By far the best way to



Above: Any case-trimming job is made easier with the RCBS Power Trim Pro case trimmer, but when you are trimming a lot of brass, it is almost a necessity.



Above: The RCBS Trim Mate Case Prep Center speeds case preparation.

do this is to tumble the cases. I use the RCBS Sidewinder tumbler with ground corncob medium. After removing the clean brass, always inspect the flash holes for pieces of tumbling medium that might be plugging them. I use a small allen wrench for this chore. Also, deburr the flash holes. Both RCBS and Sinclair International offer tools for this operation.

Finally, all cases should be run through a case trimmer, even those that do not require shortening. For those cases, simply “kiss” the mouth until the cutter is hitting all around. This will true the case mouth. Finally chamfer and deburr the mouth inside and outside; the RCBS Trim Mate Case Prep Center is one of the best tools for this job.

Before loading, each case must be carefully inspected for any defects or stress areas that show up as splits, cracks, or shiny stress lines in the brass. Any pieces showing these defects must be destroyed.