

## Cleaning Hulls

Dear Technoid,

I've been a pistol and rifle reloader for a whole bunch o'years. Graduated to 3 Dillon RL 550B loaders several years ago.

I'm getting into shotgun shell reloading, and I have a question. With metallic shell reloading, I tumble the cases in a Lyman 2200 before I reload them. Should I also tumble the plastic shell cases of shotgun shells before I reload them?

Thank you for your assistance.

Philip

Dear Philip,

Like you, I spent quite a few years with a Dillon 550 reloading pistol cartridges. I'd always shine the brass in a Lyman vibrator first. Shotgun shells are different.

Back when I started shooting shotgun, I was very often short of hulls for my reloading. I'd pick up whatever leftovers I could find at the range. The hulls were often covered with dirt or water. Since I lived in an apartment building at the time, it was a simple matter to put the dirty hulls in a coin-op washer in the basement to clean them. Then I'd put them in a lingerie bag and run them through a low heat cycle of the dryer. It was pretty noisy, I'll tell you that. Then I'd let the hulls sit for a couple of weeks in the apartment to make sure they were dry.

When I got my own house, complete with a new wife, I happily thought that I'd just clean my old hulls in the washer/dryer as before. It wasn't long at all before I learned that women don't appreciate the need for clean hulls as much as men do. Of course, by then I was recycling my own hulls and they weren't nearly as dirty, so going from the empties pouch right back into the reloader didn't matter.

The bottom line is that shotgun hulls aren't really like brass pistol and rifle cases. The shotgun hulls shouldn't have to be cleaned before reloading unless they have been submerged in mud and dirt. In normal situations, the little bit of carbon build-up on a hull couldn't matter in the slightest. Shoot the shell, put the hull in the empties pocket of your vest and when you get home, reload them and do it all again. No need for cleaning in most cases.

If you were shooting in the rain and there is a good chance that water got into some of the empties, obviously let them dry before reloading. Don't put them in the dryer or you'll get in hot water with Herself. Also, if they get too hot, it could start to loosen the brass from the plastic as both expand at different rates.

Best regards,

Bruce Buck  
Shotgun Report's Technoid