

Component Cost - Dollars and "Sense"

Of the many reasons for reloading pistol ammunition, saving money is usually one of the first that people mention, but is there any "sense" to the "cents" that we are saving? What if you are a competitive shooter firing 10's of thousands of rounds per year? We all tend to look for deals, which is perfectly normal, because most of us aren't made of money and our sponsor is the guy or gal we see in the mirror. The problem with looking for deals is that sometimes we focus on saving money in the wrong areas. Component selection is one of those areas. Many times I've heard shooters say something along the lines of "Sure that powder is great but it costs twice as much as this other powder." Well, yeah, the actual powder does cost nearly twice as much in some of these scenarios but how does that affect the cost of my shooting? Does that cost difference make my ammo cost twice as much?

To answer these questions we've taken the pricing for some common 9mm components that we sell at Dillon and used pricing from a local distributor for the components we don't sell online. Before we go any further I would like to acknowledge that there may be other suppliers, other components, other combinations that you may prefer because they are cheaper, better, whatever, and we understand that. We chose these components just for the sake of comparison.

Dillon Precision's Reloading Bench

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Our projectile for this experiment is [SNS Castings Hi-Tek coated bullets](#) since coated bullets are all the rage in competitive shooting right now. Our brass is [once fired 9mm from Dillon Precision](#). [Winchester primers](#) are popular so we are using the pricing for those, and, finally, the powders we are comparing are [Hodgdon's Titegroup](#) and [Vihtavuori's N320](#). Those two powders seem to come up in a lot of the conversations I've heard, or read, about component cost. To make life easier we used the Reloading Cost Calculator at <http://dillonprecision.net/reloading-costs/>. The charge weight for the powder was set at 4.2 grains in the calculator. This is near the upper range for both powders but it is just an average for the sake of comparison. **This is not a load we are recommending or have even tried!**

Reloading with Titegroup

1000 SNS 125gr RN \$78

1000 Once fired 9mm cases \$36.95

1000 Winchester SPP \$28.90

8lbs Hodgdon Titegroup \$125.40

Cost/Round \$0.15

Cost/100 \$15.33

Cost/1000 \$153.25

Reloading with N320

1000 SNS 125gr RN \$78

1000 Once fired 9mm cases \$36.95

1000 Winchester SPP \$28.90

4lbs VV N320 \$111.60

Cost/Round \$0.16

Cost/100 \$16.06

Cost/1000 \$160.59

Now that we've calculated our costs for each load we can take a look at the difference in the cost and how that affects our shooting. The reloading calculator rounds the numbers so with rounding in place:

Difference in Cost/Round \$0.01

Difference in Cost/100 \$0.73

Difference in Cost/1000 \$7.34

But the reality is that it is only .007 cost per round different. We determine this by dividing the "Difference in Cost Per 1000" by 1000. This give us a real cost per round difference of \$0.00734.

That cost difference per round, which is \$0.00734, can be used to determine the impact on our competition shooters budget. A competition shooter might fire 10's of thousands of rounds per year. So that \$0.00734 cost difference could make a difference, right? Let's look.

Volume Shooters Cost Difference Per Year

10,000 rounds per year = \$73.40

20,000 rounds per year = \$146.80

30,000 rounds per year = \$220.20

So NOW the numbers look pretty scary, right? Well, maybe not so scary. Those numbers are for the cost difference per year. Even for the shooter who shoots 30,000 rounds per year and chooses to use VV N320, the powder that costs twice as much, it's only \$18.35 a month more expensive. For the 10,000 round per year shooter it's only \$6.12 a month more.

So you have to take the amount of shooting that you do into account and ask yourself if you would rather have the powder you like or the powder you thought was a bargain. If you're lucky they are the same powder. If not, it's probably worth it to go with the powder you like and deal with the minimal cost difference. Either way in the end this is your money and we wouldn't dream of telling you how to spend it. Hopefully we've at least given you something to think about when making

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those decisions. Oh, and yeah, we know this math doesn't necessarily apply to rifle shooters... that's a WHOLE different conversation.