

Trust but verify



Suzanne Massie, an adviser who was helping Ronald Reagan prepare for a meeting with Mikhail Gorbachev, suggested that the President learn a few Russian phrases. She felt that doing so would help the President to more easily gain an understanding of the Russian people and their thought processes. The phrase that really grabbed Reagan was "doveryai, no proveryai" which simply means "trust, but verify." Reagan became so enamored of this phrase that Gorbachev expressed annoyance at just how frequently the President used it. For Reagan, the cold warrior, this phrase held a very timely message that reflected a political ideology that would aid him in dealing with a formidable opponent. For our purposes in discussing reloading it has a much less nuanced meaning.

Choosing which components to use in your reloads is not a task to be taken lightly. The reputation of the company is important. The suitability of those components to the task at hand is as well.

Then there is pricing to consider along with how well these components perform in your firearm of choice. Once that is done and the components are all on your bench you still have more work to do. This is where "trust, but verify" really becomes critical. It is also where a good scale and some dial calipers come in handy. Take a sample of those projectiles you just bought and weigh them.

Are they within a few grains of the advertised weight? If so then you are good on that front. If not a call to the manufacturer may be in order. While the scales are out you might as well double check your powder measure and make sure you are throwing the charge weight specified for your load. Next take the dial calipers out and measure a few projectiles.



We want to insure that the bullet diameter, as well as the weight, is within specifications for that caliber. It might also be a good idea to reference your reloading manual and double check case overall length and the amount of crimp you have applied while the calipers are out.

This isn't to say that component manufacturers are incompetent or trying to pull a fast one. The vast majority seem to be trying very hard to make a quality product at a price point that will keep customers buying. The problem is that even the best companies can, on occasion, make a mistake. Something as innocent as a mislabeled box can lead to some rather unfortunate results for a reloader who isn't careful enough to take a few minutes to weigh and measure those components. By using "trust, but verify" as your motto you can make sure that "oops" moment doesn't become an "ouch" moment.