

SECURITY OF EXPLOSIVES – SHOOTERS POWDER

THE INFORMATION GIVEN BELOW IS TAKEN FROM THE MANUFACTURE AND STORAGE OF EXPLOSIVES REGULATIONS 2005.

UNDER THE APPROVED CODE OF PRACTICE TO THE ABOVE REGULATIONS, ADVICE HAS BEEN FORMULATED WHICH MEANS THAT METAL CONTAINERS ARE NO LONGER SUITABLE FOR THE STORAGE OF SHOOTERS POWDER.

The powder must be kept in containers with no more than 550 grams of powder per container. The containers must be constructed in such a way that, in the event of a fire they do not provide additional containment that will increase the explosive force of any deflagration. Normally plastic/polythene or paper/cloth containers will be suitable for this purpose. Metal containers with a screw cap, or a push-in lid (i.e. similar to a paint tin lid) must not be used.

Although shooters' powders are generally not very sensitive to ignition by electrostatic discharge, homeloaders or others who decant the contents of plastic containers must take care to reduce the risk of build up of static electricity. Advice on appropriate precautions may be sought from the manufacturer.

The containers of powder must be kept in a box constructed of plywood with a minimum thickness of 18mm – or material with an equal or greater fire and physical resistance. (Health and Safety Laboratory tests found that 18mm plywood offered 15 minutes fire resistance. 24mm Plywood offered 30 minutes fire resistance).

Metal boxes, including ammunition boxes, are not suitable and must not be used. This is because, firstly while metal is fire resistant it also transmits heat very well and secondly, because the metal container adds additional containment that significantly increases the explosive power of the powder.

Where the box holds more than one container, each individual container must be separated by a 6mm wooden partition that is securely fixed to the outer walls of the box. Each compartment must allow 30% additional height between the top of the container and the inside of the lid.

It is a good idea to put an intumescent strip around the edges of the lid to give a good seal.

Figure 1 shows a box that would meet the requirements set out in the previous paragraphs.

It is important to remember anyone storing shooters powders must take due precautions to prevent unauthorised access to the powders. Where the room storing the explosives is not secured with a suitable lock and alarm system, the police will require that the box should meet certain minimum requirements. These are as follows:

- Securely fixed, robust steel hinges;
- A secure hasp used with a security-grade padlock; and
- A suitable arrangement to frustrate attempts to remove the box, for example by securing it by either its handles (if they are bolted through the box) or by a similarly attached ring or other attachment, to a strong point using a good-quality chain or fixing device and padlock.

Anyone requiring more information about security requirements should contact their Police Explosives Liaison Officer.

The box should be constructed so that there is no exposed metal on the inside. Internal nuts must be covered by a glued wooden liner not less than 6mm. The box must not be kept in any form of metal box, drawer or cupboard.

The box must not be located:

- Under or near any means of access or escape, for example under stairs;
- In the same room as flammable liquids;
- In areas where there are risks of fire.





Intumescent
Strip

9 compartment box

