

The Primer is the collective term for the chemical primer compound, cup and anvil which, when struck, ignites the powder charge.

The Shoulder is the section of the case that tapers down to the smaller diameter of the bullet.

The Neck is the section of the case where the bullet is seated.

The Extractor Groove – is a small groove cut in the case to enable the extractor to grab the shell and eject it. Not all Centerfire cases have extractor grooves, some use the Rim to extract.

The Rim – is the flanged portion at the end of the cartridge. On certain cartridges the Rim is larger in diameter than the case.

Smokeless Powder is the general term for any propellant used in firearms, which burns upon ignition. The two major types are black powder, which is a physical mixture of charcoal, sulfur and saltpeter, and smokeless powder, which is a nitrated chemical compound in granular form.

The Head – is the end of the cartridge at which primer is inserted.

Jacket – The envelope of brass or copper enclosing the lead core of a compound bullet.

Cartridge Designation & Calibers

The cartridge designation is the term used to designate the specific cartridge for which a firearm is chambered. The cartridge designation is marked on the head of the cartridge (also referred to as the Head Stamp) and must match the marking on the firearm barrel.

The caliber of rifles is the inside diameter of the barrel, before the rifling has been cut. It is the distance between the lands. Many different cartridges are the same caliber. For example, a 308 Win, 30-06 Springfield, and a 300 Remington Ultra Mag are all .308 calibers or .308 bore diameter.

Caliber is usually expressed in hundredths of an inch or in millimeters. For example, a 30 caliber (What can we use for a centerfire rifle here?) barrel measures 308/100 of an inch in diameter. Centerfire rifles come in a large variety of calibers (cartridge sizes) generally from .17 to .458 caliber, but have been made up to .700 caliber.

Types of Cases

There are various types of cases, each with varying shapes and contours.

As previously mentioned, different cartridges can be of the same caliber, for example the 308 Winchester, the 30-06 Springfield, and the 300 Remington Ultra Magnum are all 308 caliber, what differs is the shape of the case.

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