

WHY IS THERE A PRIMER SUPPLY SHORTAGE?

Home / Why Is There a Primer Supply Shortage?

If you’ve tried to purchase ammo or [reloading supplies](#) lately, you’ve probably noticed a lot of products are out of stock. Of all the components needed to reload ammo, it seems primers are the toughest to find, prompting many reloaders to refer to the current crisis as “The Great Primer Shortage of 2020.” The [primer supply](#) shortage doesn’t just affect reloaders, though. It’s also limiting the production of many popular types of ammunition. This can be frustrating for shooters and hunters looking to keep their edge on the range, and can be concerning for preppers, survivalists, and others who are concerned about their safety.

We are in the midst of the greatest primer shortage of all time, and we don’t see things getting better anytime soon. Read on as the experts from Powder Valley delve deeper into the primer shortage of 2020.

A Massive Increase in Demand

Like any other product in a market economy, primers are subject to the whims of supply and demand. As far as demand is concerned, a perfect storm of factors has caused a run on the ammo market like we’ve never quite seen before. A mix of the Covid-19 pandemic, civil unrest, and the possibility of an anti-2nd amendment President and Senate has caused demand to skyrocket. The pandemic specifically has incentivized shooters to learn how to reload their own ammo.

We have an extremely large number of new reloaders who have entered the market. The NSSF estimates that first time gun owners has increased to 6.2 million people over the past few months. Unfortunately, many of those reloaders entered the market anticipating that it would be easier to make their own ammo since readily available ammunition was so difficult to find. With shortages of bullets, powder, brass and primers, that has simply not been the case

Since so many people have lost a chunk, or all of their income, it makes sense that reloading, which saves on the cost of ammo at the expense of time, would become more popular than ever. Even if you’re financially stable, reloading and shooting are great socially distant activities you can do while the movie theaters, bowling alleys, and bars are shut down. With little answers on the virus, it’s hard to see when these closures and limitations will end. This is why we believe this could end up being the greatest primer shortage of all time.

Hoarding

When there is a primer shortage the first thing people normally point to is consumer hoarding. We believe this is having an impact on availability, but probably not to the extreme that many think. There are definitely some profiteers who buy primers and then sell them on auction sites or other multi list sites. This is why many online retailers have now chosen to limit the purchase quantities to an extreme low level in an effort to reduce this.

Disruptions in the Supply Chain

Demand, however, is just one part of the story. Disruptions in the supply chain have also made a big impact on the availability of primers. When it comes to ammunition supplies, bullets are easy to manufacture, brass can be re-used, and powder is generally stockpiled by companies (though perhaps not the kind you’re looking for). This leaves primers, which are relatively difficult to make, as the component that causes the bulk of ammo shortages.

In the U.S., only four companies (Winchester, Remington, Federal, and CCI) manufacture primers for civilian use, law enforcement, and the military. Even under perfect circumstances, there’s only so much they can produce at once, and needless to say, circumstances have not been perfect during the pandemic. People getting sick, missing work to take care of their kids, and self-quarantining – from factory workers to delivery drivers, and all throughout the supply chain – caused a lull in manufacturing this spring.

The Remington bankruptcy has had a large impact on the shortage of ammo and primers. With Remington in a state of financial insolvency for the past two years, suppliers were demanding payment upon delivery for products. Remington simply did not have the financial capabilities to have an abundance of raw materials on hand and had to shutter some of their production capacity. Barnes bullets and primers were hit particularly hard in the reloading market. With the recent purchase of Remington by Vista, there is a good chance that Vista will be diverting CCI and Federal primers that would typically go to reloaders to Remington ammunition production. Remington primer production capacity has never been great. The hope would be that Vista will place more emphasis on getting the Remington primer production capacity increased substantially and quickly. The best news coming out of this is for Barnes fans. With Sierra’s purchase of Barnes we anticipate the availability of Barnes bullets to increase substantially in a very short period of time.

In 2008 we saw a huge influx of Russian primers. We are not seeing that this time as the Murom Apparatus Producing plant is only producing at partial capacity due to the COVID-19 restrictions. On top of that, there have been changes in upper management at Murom which have caused further disruptions. But, we are very hopeful that these changes will have a positive effect on production and distribution in the long run.

With import restrictions out of Russia, we do not anticipate seeing the help we had from them in 2008-2012. We had also seen S&B, Unis Ginex and other foreign brands of primers enter the market during the shortages to relieve some of the pressure, but aren’t seeing that influx of primers this time around. The lack of foreign primers on the market is a major reason we believe this shortage is going to last for quite some time. We may see some help from foreign primers, but we don’t anticipate the large volumes we’ve seen previously.

What Should You Do?

As an individual, as of right now, there’s little you can do in the face of the reloading equipment supplies shortage. Keep checking your trusted online distributor Powder Valley for new arrivals of primers from all four manufacturers.

We have created some very stringent limitations on the purchase of primers in an effort to help as many people as possible work through this extremely tough time. Normally, we would say “stock up.” But that time has passed, and I would encourage everyone to learn from this. Stock up in times of plentiful supply so that you are not affected as greatly during these times of extreme shortage.

In the meantime I would encourage everyone to pray for our country and our leaders as we navigate this perilous situation.

SIGN UP & BECOME AN OFFICAL
POWDER VALLEY
FAMILY MEMBER

Be The First to Know About
Site-Wide Sales, Back-in-Stock items, New Products and Much More!

Email

Join Now

Brands	Muzzleloading	My Account
Reloading	Bullets, Sabots & Round Balls	About Us
Reloading Brass	Tools & Accessories	Contact Us
Bullets	Shooting	Privacy Policy
Equipment & Prep	Ammo Cans & Storage	Shipping Policy
Reloading Powder	Gun Cleaning	Return Policy
Primers	Reloading Manuals	Manufacturer’s Rebates
Shotshell Wads and Shot	Gun Safes & Storage	Blog
Ammunition	Magazine Loaders	
Handgun Ammunition	Swag	
Rifle Ammunition	Shirts	
Rimfire Ammunition	Hats	
Shotshell Ammunition	Koozies	
	Drinkware	