****

**Federal Expands Punch Ammo Line to Include 10mm Auto and 22 LR Loads**

*The Punch family is growing, with a powerful 10mm Auto load and a new 22 LR that is revolutionizing rimfire self-defense.*

In 2020, Federal did something different than it had in the previous 30 years. For all those decades, it has been a leading manufacturer of duty ammunition for law enforcement, and products like Hydra Shok and HST set the standard for performance in FBI protocol testing. Using data obtained during the development of those products, Federal set out to build the ultimate self-defense load for shooters who are less concerned about barrier penetration and ballistics and more concerned with how their ammunition would perform in close-range, real-world situations. Punch was the result.

“Punch is the first Federal Premium-branded Personal Defense line we made that was not specifically designed for law enforcement,” says Federal Handgun Ammunition Manager Chris Laack.

“Concealed-carry permit holders, especially new shooters, need an uncomplicated answer to the question ‘What ammo do I need for self-defense’,” says Laack. “Things to consider such as function, reliable ignition, barrier performance, terminal performance, ballistics and other considerations are a lot to digest for most people. What consumers really need to know is it will function in their gun, every time, and that it will be effective stopping a threat as quickly as possible. Punch is our easy answer for them.”

Punch offers features typically found on more expensive ammunition like high-quality powders and sealed, reliable primers. Nickel-plated cases and enhanced bullet profile geometry make Punch the smoothest feeding defense ammunition in the category. For 2020, Punch ammunition was available in five popular self-defense cartridges: a 380 Auto 85-grain offering with a muzzle velocity of 1,000 fps, 38 Special +P 120-grain load at 1,070 fps, 9mm Luger 147-grain load at 1,150 fps, 40 S&W 165-grain load at 1,130 fps, and 45 Auto 230-grain load at 890 fps. All are sold in 20-round boxes.

The public’s response to them has been strongly positive, and the line is continuing to grow. In 2021, there will be two additions: 10mm Auto and 22 Long Rifle.

**New Options**

The 10mm Auto is a natural addition to the Punch ammunition line. Originally conceived as a law enforcement round, the cartridge generated significant recoil and muzzle rise that left agencies fearing it might be too powerful for some recruits. Instead, the FBI and other agencies reduced 10mm Auto loads to more manageable levels and eventually decided to turn to the less powerful but more manageable 40 S&W. The 10mm Auto, however, has always had a loyal following and the round continues to grow in popularity because it offers more power than a 45 Auto with the added benefit of increased magazine capacity.

The new Federal Punch 10mm Auto pushes a 200-grain bullet at a muzzle velocity of 1,100 feet per second, and that equates to 538 foot-pounds of energy. That is ample threat-stopping power, and the Punch bullet’s skived hollow-point design and lead core promise excellent penetration. For the large (and growing) crowd of 10mm Auto fans, Punch provides a perfect self-defense ammunition option.

While a 10mm Auto seems like a natural fit to the Punch family, it is more surprising to see a 22 LR round in the lineup. The 22 LR remains the most popular cartridge in America, but this century-old round was hardly conceived for protection. With most projectiles weighing around 40 grains and traveling from the muzzle at around 1,300 feet per second (or even lower velocities when fired from short-barreled pistols) the 22 LR produces roughly 150 foot-pounds of energy. That is about 30 foot-pounds less than 380 Auto and half the muzzle energy generated by a 9mm Luger, but the primary reason the 22 LR has never been adopted as a self-defense round has less to do with terminal ballistics and more to do with a lack of suitable bullets.

“We’ve talked about making a 22 LR defensive load for some time,” says Dan Compton, Federal’s manager of shotshell and rimfire ammunition. “We finally decided that people are already carrying 22 LRs so we might as well build a .22 bullet optimized for protection.”

Traditionally, 22 LR bullets have fallen into three primary categories: lead round nose, copper plated, and copper plated hollow points. None of these consistently perform well in gel tests because they do not shed energy in a uniform and efficient manner. Over-penetration, under-penetration, bullet fragmentation, and other issues have prevented the 22 LR from being taken seriously as a self-defense cartridge. That’s all changed with Federal’s new Punch round.

**The Reason Punch Rimfire Works**

Understanding why Punch rimfire ammunition is so effective requires an understanding of the bullet’s evolution. When Federal set out to create the ultimate protection bullet, engineers digested years of data on bullet performance in FBI protocol testing and translated that to real-world performance. This clean-slate approach gave engineers the freedom they needed to design Punch bullets perfectly suited for their end users.

“We weren’t as focused on barrier performance and other technical elements that goes into ammunition for duty guns,” Laack says. “It is an easy solution for those shooters looking for a load solely based on being a personal protection round for common defensive situations.”

By not being bound by barrier test results, the engineering team at Federal could take 30 years of data about jacket skiving, bullet weights, velocities, metallurgy and more and customize a bullet that was ideally suited for protection—one that would perform exceptionally well in bare gel or heavy clothing. Perhaps most importantly, every Punch bullet was specifically engineered for optimal performance for each cartridge. For example, although 380 Auto, 38 Special and 9mm Luger Punch bullets have similar diameters, each was engineered from the ground up to perform in its respective cartridge. The 9mm Punch bullet has different geometry than the 380 Auto and 38 Special, and this level of customization ensures peak performance from every bullet in the Punch line.

“We looked at specifications from our Hydra-Shok Deep, HST and other bullet designs, and took what made sense for Punch,” Laack says. “We selected whatever elements worked best for each individual caliber. We then played with thickness of the jacket, skive depth, hollow point geometry and even differences in lead cores to build the recipe for Punch.”

This is what made the 22 LR Punch load possible—and set the stage for a new era in armed self-defense.

Federal began the Punch 22 LR project by reducing the bullet’s weight to just 29 grains. That offers an increase in velocity: From a 2-inch barrel, the load clocks in at 1,070 feet per second, which makes it effective in short-barreled 22 revolvers and pistols.

The bullet itself is a departure from standard 22 LR design. It features a flat nose and utilizes a heavy nickel-plated jacket around a lead core. So not only does it travel faster than competing 22 projectiles, but its design also deliberately minimizes expansion and retains weight to maintain sufficient straight-line penetration. That is a lot to ask from a .22 bullet, which is why other manufacturers have shied away from the challenge. But Federal’s engineering team pulled it off, giving America’s favorite cartridge a chance to prove itself for protection.

“We’re not trying to replace the 9mm,” says Dan Compton. “We decided that for a .22 defense bullet, penetration was more important than expansion.”

The bullet also had to function in a short barrel, and Punch does that. Federal’s engineers tested Punch 29-grain 22 LR ammunition against three other small-caliber loads: 25 Auto 50-grain FMJs, 32 Auto 60-grain HPs, and 32 Auto 71-grain TMJs. The 25 Auto, 22 LR Punch and 32 Auto TMJ reached the FBI protocol minimum penetration threshold of 12 inches in 10 percent gel (the 32 Auto 60-grain round penetrated an average of 8.5 inches). Of the three loads that reached the minimum depth, only the 32 Auto out-penetrated 22 Punch.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Load | Avg. Penetration in 10% Gel  |
| **22 LR Punch 29 Gr** | **13.75”** |
| 25 Auto FMJ 50 Gr | 12.69” |
| 32 Auto HP 60 Gr | 8.5” |
| 32 Auto TMJ 71 Gr | 15.25” |

That type of penetration is outstanding for a 22 LR bullet and clear evidence that Punch is suitable for self-defense.

“We set out to prove that a .22 bullet could penetrate between 12 and 18 inches, and we accomplished our goal,” Compton says.

The news of a dedicated defense bullet for the 22 LR will be welcome news for millions of shooters. With CCW permit applications on the rise and gun sales skyrocketing, there are many new shooters who may not be comfortable with the muzzle rise and recoil of a large-caliber centerfire pistol. The 22 LR, by contrast, produces very mild recoil and is easy for new shooters to manage. There are many compact, easy to conceal 22 LR revolvers and pistols available, and these guns boast significantly higher capacities than centerfire counterparts. Lightweight, low-recoil 22 LR handguns have always been ideal for concealed carry but were limited by a lack of effective self-defense ammunition. Federal’s Punch 22 LR has changed that forever.

**The Changing Face of Defense**

For years, FBI protocol testing has been the standard evaluation for self-defense ammunition, and while Federal has long been a leader in FBI testing with bullets like the HST and Hydra-Shok, the company has put all that data to use building the first bullet for the shooter who is focused on protection.

“Many personal defenders think, ‘If it works for law enforcement then it’s good for me.’ That is a great guideline and still our ultimate recommendation,” says Laack. “But that may add features not necessarily required for everyone's daily carry.”

By tailoring Punch ammunition to the end user, Federal has created an ideal load for those who want reliable protection in real-world applications—no matter what round they shoot or firearm they carry. New 22 LR and 10mm Auto are living proof.

The contents of this article were produced by Federal and are supplied by the company. Permission is granted to copy, reformat and/or publish this article in whole or in part.