

40 S&W

Brian McCombie

Detractors of the 40 S&W like to snicker as they call the round the "40 Short and Wimpy." True, the 40 S&W is shorter and less powerful than its big brother, the 10MM AUTO. But it is in no way a wimpy round. It is used by many in law enforcement and the civilian side for self-defense, and is a favorite at certain venues of competitive shooting.

As with so many tactical changes that have occurred in law enforcement, the 40 S&W has its origins in the tragic FBI Miami shootout of 1986, which saw under-gunned FBI agents come away with two dead and five wounded. The FBI decided it needed a more powerful duty round, and eventually selected the 10MM AUTO. Which proved to be too powerful—for comfortable shooting by FBI field personnel, at least.

Which led to shortening the 10MM brass and using a smaller primer. The rimless 40 S&W was born. This "little brother" also allowed gun makers to design more compact handguns versus those chambered in 10MM AUTO. Handguns in 40 S&W soon became the norm at hundreds of law enforcement agencies around the nation, and civilian shooters followed suit in droves. Pistols chambered in 40 S&W offered nearly same ammunition capacity as the very popular 9MM models, yet with more foot pounds of energy.

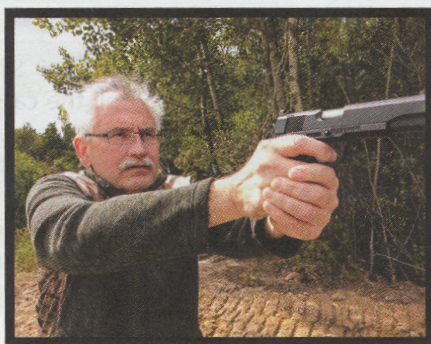
Several years ago, the FBI made a well-publicized switch to duty handguns chambered in 9MM (back to 9MM's, actually, the FBI duty round in Miami 1986), leaving behind their 40 S&W's. Which caused numerous police depart-

ments to also bail out on their 40's. A glut of used 40 S&W pistols soon hit the market.

Followed by a few gun writers proclaiming the 40 S&W D.O.A. "End of the line", they opined.

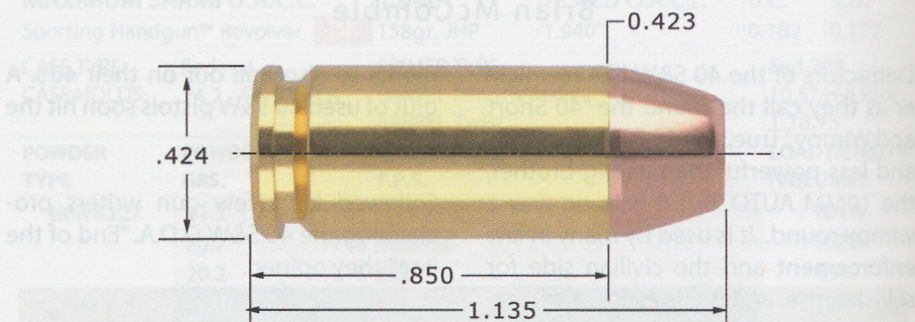
What they failed to note was that the used law enforcement 40's were quickly snapped up by civilian shooters, who understood that 40 S&W pistols are very shootable and powerful handguns, perfect for concealed carry and home defense.

The tactical shine may be off the 40 S&W a bit thanks to the FBI's decision. However, shooters in the know know: this is a legitimate handgun round, no matter the law enforcement flavor of the day.



Brian McCombie is a Field Editor for the NRA's American Hunter, loves 1911's and long-range rifle shooting.

40 S&W



Maximum S.A.A.M.I. Overall Cartridge Length: 1.135"

BULLET CHOICES FOR THE 40 S&W

Sporting Handgun™

SPHG JHP

Grain

135

150

180

200



TECHNICAL INFORMATION

Like most pistol cartridges, the 40 S&W headspaces on the case mouth. When loading for this cartridge, bell the case mouth just enough to reliably guide the bullet into position and then secure the bullet with a taper crimp. Using this seating and crimping technique will help ensure proper headspacing.

The favorite all-around 40 S&W load in our Ballistics Lab consists of our 135 grain bullet and Blue Dot. All of the standard small pistol primers available give good results with this combination.

The S.A.A.M.I. overall cartridge lengths for this cartridge are 1.085" min. and 1.135" max. Seating to anywhere in this range is acceptable, provided that the rounds will function well in your particular firearm.

40 S&W - 135 grain

10mm (.400")

MAXIMUM SAAMI O.A.C.L.

1.135"

TESTED O.A.C.L.

B.C. S.D.

Sporting Handgun®

SHG

135gr. JHP

1.125"

0.093 0.121

CASE TYPE: Winchester

PRIMER TYPE

WSP

CASE HOLDS: 12.7 Gr. WATER

BARREL Length/Make

4.0" S&W

BARREL Twist

1-16"

POWDER
TYPEPOWDER CHG.
GRS.MUZZLE VEL.
F.P.S.LOAD DENSITY
(VOLUME)

WST

6.8 * MAX. 1108

** 102%

6.3 1027

94%

5.8 945

87%

AA #5

9.0 * MAX. 1117

75%

8.5 1091

70%

8.0 1065

66%

Unique

7.2 * MAX. 1125

96%

6.7 1042

89%

6.2 958

83%

Bullseye

6.4 * MAX. 1160

80%

5.9 1071

74%

5.4 981

67%

Green Dot

5.8 MAX. 1166

88%

5.3 1047

80%

4.8 * 929

73%

AA #7

11.9 MAX. 1224

95%

11.4 1190

91%

10.9 * 1156

87%

AA #2

6.6 * MAX. 1232

80%

6.1 1197

74%

5.6 1162

68%

WSF

7.8 * MAX. 1242

82%

7.3 1157

77%

6.8 1072

71%

Blue Dot

11.3 * MAX. 1243

** 111%

Most Accurate

10.8 1188

** 106%

Powder Tested

10.3 1133

** 101%

CFE Pistol

8.8 MAX. 1382

82%

8.3 * 1333

77%

7.8 1283

72%

BC=Ballistic Coefficient SD=Sectional Density
 *Most Accurate Load Tested **Compressed Load

Use Maximum Loads with Caution
 Refer to page 79 for additional safety information

40 S&W - 150 grain

10mm (.400")

MAXIMUM SAAMI O.A.C.L.

1.135"

TESTED O.A.C.L.

B.C.

S.D.

Sporting Handgun®

SHG

150gr. JHP

1.125"

0.106

0.134

CASE TYPE: Winchester

PRIMER TYPE

WSP

CASE HOLDS: 11.3 Gr. WATER

BARREL Length/Make

4.0" S&W

BARREL Twist

1-16"

POWDER
TYPEPOWDER CHG.
GRS.MUZZLE VEL.
F.P.S.LOAD DENSITY
(VOLUME)

AA #7

10.5

MAX.

1083

94%

10.0

1019

90%

9.5 *

955

85%

AA #2

6.4

MAX.

1118

87%

5.9

1070

80%

5.4 *

1022

74%

AA #5

8.7

* MAX.

1123

81%

Most Accurate

8.2

1051

76%

Powder Tested

7.7

978

72%

HS-6

9.2

* MAX.

1137

89%

8.7

1075

84%

8.2

1013

79%

Hi-Skor 800-X

8.3

MAX.

1164

**

116%

7.8 *

1095

**

109%

7.3

1027

**

102%

Power Pistol

8.0

MAX.

1170

94%

7.5

1102

88%

7.0 *

1035

83%

WSF

6.9

MAX.

1209

81%

6.4 *

1089

76%

5.9

969

70%

AutoComp

7.3

* MAX.

1220

76%

6.8

1138

71%

6.3

1056

66%

CFE Pistol

7.6

MAX.

1236

79%

7.1

1157

74%

6.6 *

1078

69%

Longshot

9.0

MAX.

1297

100%

8.5 *

1260

94%

8.0

1222

88%

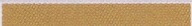



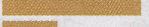




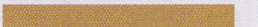








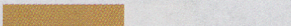

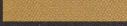






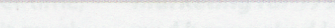

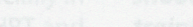
The S.A.A.M.I. overall cartridge lengths for this cartridge are 1.085" min. and 1.135" max. Seating to anywhere in this range is acceptable, provided that the rounds will function well in your particular firearm.

BC=Ballistic Coefficient SD=Sectional Density
*Most Accurate Load Tested **Compressed Load

Use Maximum Loads with Caution
Refer to page 79 for additional safety information

40 S&W - 180 grain

10mm (.400")

MAXIMUM SAAMI O.A.C.L.			1.135"	TESTED O.A.C.L.	B.C.	S.D.
Sporting Handgun®			SHG 180gr. JHP	1.125"	0.147	0.161
CASE TYPE:	Winchester		PRIMER TYPE		WSP	
CASE HOLDS:	9.9	Gr. WATER	BARREL Length/Make		4.0" S&W	
			BARREL Twist		1-16"	
POWDER TYPE	POWDER CHG. GRS.		MUZZLE VEL. F.P.S.		LOAD DENSITY (VOLUME)	
WST	4.8	* MAX.	860		92%	
	4.3		768		83%	
	3.8		675		73%	
Bullseye	4.8	* MAX.	901		77%	
	4.3		797		69%	
	3.8		694		61%	
Green Dot	4.9	* MAX.	922		95%	
	4.4		825		85%	
	3.9		727		76%	
AA #7	8.8	* MAX.	944		90%	
	8.3		914		85%	
	7.8		884		80%	
AA #2	5.3	MAX.	955		82%	
	4.8		898		75%	
	4.3	*	842		67%	
AA #5	7.2	* MAX.	971		77%	
	6.7		936		71%	
	6.2		901		66%	
Titegroup	4.7	MAX.	978		63%	
	4.2	*	877		57%	
	3.7		776		50%	
WSF Most Accurate Powder Tested	5.9	* MAX.	981		79%	
	5.4		897		73%	
	4.9		813		66%	
Silhouette	6.2	MAX.	1020		78%	
	5.7	*	949		72%	
	5.2		877		66%	
CFE Pistol	5.9	MAX.	1034		70%	
	5.4	*	949		64%	
	4.9		864		58%	

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 *Most Accurate Load Tested **Compressed Load

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that the recoil tended to be a bit much for some agents to handle, especially in the HK MP5/10 utilized by FBI HRT and SWAT. This led to the downloading of the cartridge to the 10mm Lite/10mm FBI and eventually to Smith & Wesson's development of the 40 S&W.

and has worked in the hunting and shooting industry for over 25 years, training with law enforcement and military around the world.

The 40 S&W's similar size and capac-

40 S&W - 200 grain

10mm (.400")

MAXIMUM SAAMI O.A.C.L.		1.135"	TESTED O.A.C.L.	B.C.	S.D.
Sporting Handgun®		SHG	200gr. JHP	1.125"	0.163 0.179
CASE TYPE:	Winchester	PRIMER TYPE	WSP		
CASE HOLDS:	9.3 Gr. WATER	BARREL Length/Make	4.0" S&W		
		BARREL Twist	1-16"		
POWDER TYPE	POWDER CHG. GRS.	MUZZLE VEL. F.P.S.	LOAD DENSITY (VOLUME)		
AA #7	7.3 MAX.	846	80%		
	6.8 *	774	74%		
	6.3	703	69%		
True Blue	5.9 MAX.	876	65%		
	5.4 *	802	60%		
	4.9	728	54%		
CFE Pistol	4.8 * MAX.	897	61%		
	4.3	817	54%		
	3.8	737	48%		
AutoComp	5.2 MAX.	898	66%		
	4.7 *	829	59%		
	4.2	760	53%		
Silhouette	5.5 MAX.	905	74%		
	5.0 *	830	67%		
	4.5	755	60%		
HS-6	6.3 MAX.	908	74%		
	5.8	853	68%		
	5.3 *	798	62%		
Power Pistol	5.8 * MAX.	933	83%		
Most Accurate	5.3	850	76%		
Powder Tested	4.8	767	69%		
Longshot	5.9 * MAX.	942	79%		
	5.4	883	73%		
	4.9	824	66%		
Hi-Skor 800-X	6.2 MAX.	961	** 105%		
	5.7 *	913	97%		
	5.2	865	88%		
IMR BLUE	8.0 MAX.	987	** 111%		
	7.5	932	** 104%		
	7.0 *	876	97%		

BC=Ballistic Coefficient SD=Sectional Density
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