

UniqueTek “Tips” File #25: “Labeling Your Primer Tubes”

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Preface

Ok. Before I even get started, I know I’m likely to receive emails from handloaders telling me this Tips file is either obvious or flat out unnecessary. But keep in mind that there are always guys just starting out and it has always been my goal to share my experience to educate and enlighten. With that said, here we go.

Maintaining Primer Identity

Once primers are out of their original box, it is virtually impossible to identify exactly what they are. And using the wrong primer can have disastrous consequences ... and I’m not just referring to the danger of trying to insert a large primer into a small primer pocket. The wrong primer can result in inconsistent ignition, variable chamber pressures, or out-and-out failure to ignite (as can happen if a hard primer is used on a revolver with a competition action job).

Currently the selection of primers goes way beyond small or large, pistol or rifle, regular or magnum. And primers from different manufacturers can, and do, perform differently. Now days you also have “match” grade and “bench rest” grade primers. I checked Midway USA and they had 53 types from four manufacturers ... and that didn’t include shotgun or 50 BMG primers!

The potential for confusing primers is greatly increased on presses with a primer feed system. Once primers have been loaded into the press, or just the primer pickup tubes, you can’t be 100% certain of what they are ... other than if they are small or large primers.

Best practice calls for having only the primers and powder on the bench for the cartridge being loaded. But if you are accustomed to loading hundreds of rounds in a single session, you probably load multiple primer pickup tubes before starting. This opens up the possibility that you’ll have leftover primers when you finish loading ... or if your loading session is interrupted. Of course, it is also possible to run out of powder before you run out of primers.

Label the Primer Pickup Tubes and Primer System

So why not add a little insurance and label both your primer pickup tubes and the primer system on your press? After all, it is a common practice to label the powder hopper with the type of gunpowder and maybe even the charge weight.

Tags for Primer Pickup Tubes:

Small blank white price tags are the most effective and inexpensive way of labeling primer pickup tubes that I’ve found. Look for #1 “Strung White Merchandise Tags” (5/8"W x 31/32"H) or Small “Jewelry Tags” (25/64" x 55/64"H). Just write the primer type on a tag and attach it to the retaining clip that keeps the primers in the primer pickup tube. There isn’t a lot of space to write on these, but you can write on both sides.

TIP: The images at right are approximately actual size. So you can try it out by printing a copy of this page, cutting out the tags and writing on them. Keep in mind that the actual tags will be on stiffer stock compared to printer paper.



TIP: I recommend removing the string and threading the tag directly onto the retaining clip. That prevents the strings from becoming entangled when you are working with multiple primer pickup tubes. Indeed, some tags can be purchased without the string ... but they are harder to find and may actually be more expensive. The image at right shows a 10mm x 22mm Jewelry tag. I find this size works best for primer pickup tubes.



TIP: You can color code the tags with a highlighter to further enhance identification. But apply the highlighter before writing on the tag so the ink won't be smeared.

Tag Your Primer System:

You can similarly tag the primer feed system on your press. The larger #1 Strung White Merchandise Tags ... or an even larger size tag ... are a good choice for here. You can also get creative and make something that attaches onto the primer magazine tube or some other location on the press.

TIP: UniqueTek offers an aluminum tag that clips onto the primer feed system housing and gives you a 1" x 3" area upon which you can write the primer type, powder type, or any other important information. It comes bundled with 100 Jewelry Tags for labeling primer pickup tubes.



UniqueTek Primer System
Tag on XL 650 Press

Postface

When I started this Tips file, I had no idea that there was a new product in it. But after searching the web and finding nothing, I was inspired to design a product to fill the need. Otherwise, I try not the use a Tips file as an advertisement a UniqueTek product. Indeed, if there were similar products available from other manufacturers, I would have happily listed them herein.

Resources

Although price tags can also be found on eBay and Amazon.com, I did not include any of those links as they come and go constantly.

Store Supply Warehouse

Home Page: <https://www.storesupply.com>

#1 Tag: <https://www.storesupply.com/pc-13360-788-strung-merchandise-tags-1-white-93113.aspx>

Sm Jewelry Tag: <https://www.storesupply.com/pc-13363-947-small-jewelry-tags-with-burgundy-strings-93116.aspx>

JewelrySupply.com

Home Page: <https://www.jewelrystore.com>

#1 Tag: <https://www.retailresource.com/product/66747/1516-x-916-Merchandise-Tags-wString>

10mm x 22mm Jewelry Tag: https://www.jewelrystore.com/22mm-White-Paper-Jewelry-String-Tags-100-Pcs_p_3322.html

8mm x 16mm Jewelry Tag: https://www.jewelrystore.com/16mm-White-Paper-String-Tags-100-Pcs_p_24686.html

I prefer 10mm x 22mm tags over the 8mm x 16mm tags as they provide a bit more room on which to write.

Jewelry Displays & Boxes

Home Page: <https://www.jewelrydisplaysandboxes.com>

10mm x 22mm Jewelry Tag: https://www.jewelrydisplaysandboxes.com/Paper-String-Tags-White-Pack-of-100_p_22.html

8mm x 16mm Jewelry Tag: https://www.jewelrydisplaysandboxes.com/White-Paper-String-Tags-Pack-of-100_p_2783.html

This source sells only Jewelry Tags but at a great price and you can purchase in 100 count packages.

UniqueTek, Inc.

Home Page: <https://www.uniquetek.com>

Primer System Tag: <https://www.uniquetek.com/product/T1747>