

# UniqueTek “Tips” File #26: “Reloading Press Trash Tray”

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All sorts of debris tends to fall off your press and reloading bench ... usually ending up on the floor. This can be almost anything including powder grains, stray brass or bullets, primers (spent or live), small press parts, tools, etc.

A customer sent me this idea for a Trash Tray that he made from a Winchester 5000 ct primer box (7" x 6.5" x 2.5"). He attached it under the lip of the bench, so it is positioned to catch anything that falls off the press and bench. He thought it might be an idea for a new UniqueTek product. But, as every bench is unique, making a tray that could be installed on all benches just wasn't practical. So, I figured that this fit into the DIY category and decided to make it a Tips file.



## Installing a Primer Box Trash Tray:

The frame of my reloading bench frame is formed sheet metal and has a 3-1/4" high panel above the drawers which provided the perfect place to mount the tray. I simply attached a pair of 6" corner braces to the front of the bench to serve as shelf brackets. Since the panel was only 3-1/4" high, I had to shorten one side of the corner braces. I then took an empty primer box, cut off the lid and placed it on the corner braces. It was just that simple. The press Operating Handle hit the box but cutting a little notch in the box solved that problem. And, after all, the box is disposable.



Corner Braces

I did find that the primer box, being so light weight, tended to slide around on the brackets too easily. But that was fixed by simply applying a strip of double-sided Scotch tape to the brackets. And the bench drawer beneath the tray pulls out far enough that I can easily access most items with the box still on the brackets.



Of course, you don't have to use a primer box. You can use any tray with dimensions that fit your particular bench. And you can attach it using whatever method works best for you.

## My Version of a Trash Tray:

I decided that I wanted something more durable and permanent than a cardboard primer box, and that could be emptied and cleaned. I happened to have a plastic tray that was 12.5" x 6" x 2.25". Although I would have preferred it to be both a little longer and less deep, it was adequate to the task.

I also decided to attach the tray magnetically instead of using the corner braces. So I used some heavy-duty adhesive-backed magnetic tape that I happened to have. The magnetic tape isn't super strong, so I stuck a strip along the entire back of the tray. I liked this attachment method as it didn't require drilling any new holes in the bench. I attached the tray immediately below the bench top and offset it to the left just enough to clear the press operating handle as I didn't want to notch the plastic tray. This position actually worked well as it centered the tray where I stand when operating the press.



## Closing Thoughts

Now that I've had the Trash Tray installed for several reloading sessions, I'm surprised just how much debris it catches. Besides keeping the floor cleaner, it also catches small parts from the press (the failsafe rod spring instantly comes to mind) and saves me the aggravation of crawling around on my knees with a flashlight trying to find it.

The major advantage of using a Primer Box is that it can be just tossed in the trash when it gets too dirty. And you get a new tray every time you buy a 5000ct sleeve of primers. But any tray that fits your bench will work just as well. Either way, this was a truly inspirational idea.

I also found out that the magnetic tape didn't want to stick to the plastic tray. Ultimately, I had to drill a few holes through the tray and magnetic tape and attach it using some small screws. At least I still avoided the need to drill any holes in my bench.

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### Acknowledgements:

Thanks to Gary Nicholl for sending me this idea. He also sent me a couple of photos of the trash tray (or "bib" as he calls it) that he made for his Dillon RL 550 press (see photos below). As Gary's bench was open underneath, he left the lid attached to the primer box and used the box flap to attach it to the bottom of the bench. You will notice that he cut a notch in the box to clear the crank when the press is cycled. You can also see where he applied strips of blue painter tape to the box flaps to help the box hang more level. Gary was clearly thinking "outside the box" on this one!

