

38 Special +P with 135 gr Gold Dot® HP

Lab Notes: The 38 Special now ranks as a "Century Cartridge," and is still one of the most popular handgun cartridges ever developed. In the civilian market, the 38 Special is very popular as a concealed-carry cartridge. Short-barrel revolvers need special bullet designs to insure proper performance. This led Speer to create a new 38 Special Short Barrel™ bullet series for 2004.

We started with proven Gold Dot bonded-core technology, then added a huge hollow point cavity that's tuned for 38 Special velocities. The new bullets are available in 110, 135 and 147 grain. We settled on the 135 grain weight for our factory-loaded Gold Dot ammunition to maintain proper penetration in FBI test protocols.

Of the three new bullets, the 135 grain is the best choice for short-barrel revolvers rated for +P ammo. This bullet fully expands at

velocities of 860 ft/sec (see photo); any of the higher-velocity loads here should make that number in a 2-inch barrel. Note that these are +P loads and approach 20,000 psi pressure levels; most of the start loads here exceed the standard 38 Special pressure limit of 17,000 psi. Make sure that your gun manufacturer rates your revolver for 38 Special +P ammo before using these loads.

If your RCBS® bullet seater punch does not fit this bullet contour, contact them at 800-533-5000. Do not load lighter than the start loads shown, and apply a generous crimp in the groove provided.

The loads here remain within the 20,000 psi pressure limit established for 38 Special +P. If you need to load non-+P ammo, we recommend you use the 110 grain Short Barrel Gold Dot.

Test Conditions—Case: SPEER; Primer: CCI® 500 ; Test Firearm: S&W M14; Barrel: 6" 1-18¾" twist

135 gr SPEER Short Barrel Gold Dot HP

COAL tested: 1.450"

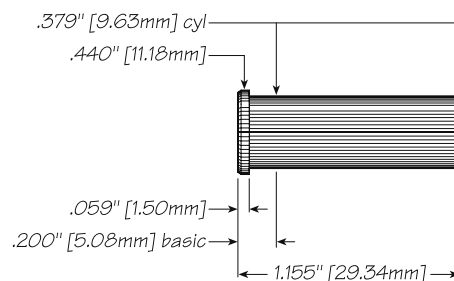
PART Number 4014 BC = 0.141 SD = 0.151

Propellant	Start Charge, gr	Start Charge Velocity	MAX Charge, gr	MAX. Charge Velocity
Power Pistol®	6.0	983	6.4	1065
AA #5	6.6	1000	7.0	1052
AA #7	7.8	964	8.2	1030
HS-6	6.8	944	7.2	1027
Viht. 3N37	6.0	969	6.4	1007
Unique®	4.8	867	5.2	988
H. Universal	5.0	937	5.2	977
PB	4.3	818	4.7	936

Bold type denotes MAXIMUM loads; use with caution.



135 gr Gold Dot HPs fired into gelatin from 2" S&W 38 Spl revolver (average velocity = 861 ft/sec)



◆ IMPORTANT SAFETY NOTE ◆

When loading any 38 Special ammunition with jacketed bullets, use care to prevent a bullet-in-bore condition in revolvers:

- Do not load this bullet with charges lighter than the **start loads** shown here.
- Firmly crimp the bullets. This gives more efficient ignition with the propellants we used.
- Do not fire *any* jacketed ammunition in a revolver whose barrel-cylinder gap is greater than 0.012 inch. We recommend a 0.008 inch maximum gap for jacketed bullets in the 38 Special.