.357 Magnum

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The **.357 S&W Magnum**, or simply **.357 Magnum**, is a revolver cartridge created by Elmer Keith, Phillip B. Sharpe,[3] Colonel D. B. Wesson[3] of firearms manufacturer Smith & Wesson, and Winchester.[4][5] It is based upon Smith & Wesson's earlier .38 Special cartridge. The .357 Magnum cartridge was introduced in 1934, and its use has since become widespread. This cartridge started the "Magnum" era of handgun ammunition.[6] This cartridge has sufficient energy to produce hydrostatic shock (remote wounding effects) in living targets,[7] which probably contributes to its positive reputation for stopping power.[8]

.357 Magnum

.357 Magnum ammunition

Type	Handgun/Carbine
Place of origin	United States
Production history	
Designer	Elmer Keith and Phillip B. Sharpe
Designed	1934
Specifications	
Parent case	.38 Special
Case type	Rimmed, straight
Bullet diameter	.357 in (9.1 mm)
Neck diameter	.379 in (9.6 mm)
Base diameter	.379 in (9.6 mm)
Rim diameter	.440 in (11.2 mm)
Rim thickness	.060 in (1.5 mm)
Case length	1.29 in (33 mm)
Overall length	1.59 in (40 mm)
Primer type	Small pistol, magnum
Maximum pressure	44,000 psi (300 MPa)

Ballistic performance

Bullet weight/type	Velocity	Energy
125 gr (8.1 g) Bonded Defense JHP	1,600 ft/s (490 m/s)	710 ft·lbf (960 J)
130 gr (8.4 g) JHP	1,410 ft/s (430 m/s)	574 ft·lbf (778 J)
158 gr (10.2 g) Gold Dot JHP	1,400 ft/s (430 m/s)	688 ft·lbf (933 J)
180 gr (12 g) WFNGC Hard Cast	1,300 ft/s (400 m/s)	676 ft·lbf (917 J)
200 gr (13 g) WFNGC Hard Cast	1,200 ft/s (370 m/s)	640 ft·lbf (870 J)

Test barrel length: 4 in (102 mm) (vented)
Source: Federal[1]*, DoubleTap Ammunition*[2]

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Design

The .357 Magnum was collaboratively developed over a period in the early to mid-1930s by a group of individuals in a direct response to Colt's .38 Super Automatic. At the time, the .38 Super was the only American pistol cartridge capable of defeating automobile cover and the early ballistic vests that were just beginning to emerge in the post-World War I "Gangster Era."[4] Tests at the time revealed that those vests defeated any handgun cartridge traveling at less than about 1000 ft/s. Colt's .38 Super Automatic just edged over that velocity and was able to penetrate car doors and vests that bootleggers and gangsters were employing as cover. [9]

Though .38 and .357 would seem to be different-diameter chamberings, in fact they are identical. 0.357 inch is the true bullet diameter of the .38 Special cartridge as well. The .38 Special nomenclature relates to the previous use of heeled bullets (such as the .38 Long Colt), which were the same diameter as the case. Thus, the only external difference in the two cartridges is a slight difference in length, solely for safety purposes as explained below.

Much credit for the .357's early development is given to hunter and experimenter Elmer Keith. Keith's early work in loading the .38 Special to increasingly higher pressure levels was made possible by the availability of heavy, target shooting-oriented revolvers like the Smith & Wesson 38/44 "Heavy Duty" and