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federal shotshell reloading data

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Federal Shotshell Reloading Data: A Complete Guide for the Modern Reloading Enthusiast

Reloading shotgun shells can be a rewarding hobby that saves money, allows for customization, and offers a deeper understanding of the ballistics that govern your firearm. Among the many brands available, Federal is a staple in the shotgun community, known for its reliable shells, consistent performance, and comprehensive reloading data. Whether you are a seasoned reloader or just starting out, having accurate, up to date Federal shotshell reloading data is essential for achieving safe, consistent, and high quality loads.

In this article we will explore everything you need to know about Federal reloading data: where it comes from, how to interpret it, common load configurations for popular gauges, safety tips, and advanced techniques. By the end, you'll have a solid foundation to confidently reload your own Federal shells and fine tune them for any application.

What Makes Federal a Popular Choice for Reloading?

Federal is one of the most recognized names in the ammunition market. Their shells are produced with strict quality control, and the brand offers an extensive range of shot sizes, loads, and applications. The key reasons many reloaders prefer Federal shells include:

- Consistent dimensions – The internal and external dimensions of Federal shells are tightly controlled, making them ideal for accurate reloading.
- Wide range of loads – From low pressure target loads to high velocity hunting loads, Federal provides data for every use case.
- Availability of reloading components – Federal primers, wads, and shot are readily available from major suppliers.
- Transparent data – The brand publishes detailed reloading charts that are easy to read and interpret.

Because of these strengths, Federal reloading data has become a go to reference for reloaders worldwide.

Where to Find Official Federal Reloading Data

Federal's official reloading data is typically distributed in two main forms:

1. PDF Charts – The most common format, available on the Federal website or from retailers. These charts include load tables for various gauges and shot sizes, along with notes on safe pressure limits.
2. Reloading Software – Many reloading programs integrate Federal data sets, allowing you to input shell dimensions and receive recommended loads.

When using any reloading data, always verify that you have the latest version. Ammunition manufacturers occasionally update their data to reflect new manufacturing processes or to improve safety margins.

Accessing the Data Online

Visit the official Federal website and navigate to the "Reloading" or "Data" section. Download the PDF for the gauge you're interested in, or use the online reloading calculator. Some retailers also provide printable charts that you can keep handy while reloading.

Using Reloading Software

Popular reloading programs such as *Reloading Data*, *Shotgun Reloading Calculator*, and *GunZilla*offer built in Federal data sets. These tools can help you:

- Calculate safe powder charges based on barrel length and load type.
- Generate reloading tables that match your specific shell dimensions.
- Track your own load histories for future reference.

Many reloaders find that software is especially helpful when experimenting with new load combinations or when working with custom shells.

How to Read and Interpret Federal Reloading Tables

Federal reloading charts are organized by gauge, shot size, and load type. While the format may vary slightly between PDFs, the general structure remains the same:

1. Shell Size – 12 gauge, 20 gauge, etc.
2. Shot Size – Typically listed in fractions of an inch (e.g., 0.24, 0.28, 0.3).
3. Load Type – Target, hunting, or custom.
4. Powder Type – The recommended powder (e.g., Winchester 291, Hodgdon 700X, etc.).
5. Powder Charge – Expressed in grains or milliliters, with a range (minimum–maximum).
6. Primer Type – Federal 210 or 212, or other compatible primers.
7. Wad Type – The recommended wad (e.g., Federal 12 gauge wad).
8. Shot Size & Weight – The weight of the shot per shell.
9. Velocity & Energy – Expected muzzle velocity and energy.
10. Notes – Safety warnings, recommended barrel length, or other special instructions.

When you first read a table, focus on the **powder charge range** and the **notes**. The notes often contain critical safety information, such as maximum barrel length or specific primer requirements.

Common Federal Shotshell Sizes and Their Reloading Data

Federal 12 Gauge Reloading Data

12 gauge is the most popular shotgun gauge, offering versatility for hunting, target shooting, and home defense. Federal provides a broad spectrum of loads for this gauge, from low pressure target loads to high velocity hunting loads.

- Target Loads – Typically use a lighter shot size (e.g., 0.28) and a moderate powder charge (e.g., 8–10 grains). These loads are designed for low recoil and high accuracy.
- Hunting Loads – Use heavier shot (e.g., 0.3–0.38) and a higher powder charge (e.g., 11–13 grains). These loads provide greater energy for hunting small game.
- Custom Loads – Allow you to fine tune velocity and energy by adjusting powder charge within the safe range.

Example data for a 12 gauge 0.28 target load (illustrative):

- Powder: Winchester 291 – 8.5 grains
- Primer: Federal 210
- Wad: Federal 12 gauge wad
- Shot: 0.28, 0.6 oz
- Velocity: 1700 fps
- Energy: 1,200 ft lb

Always double check the exact numbers on the official chart, as these values can vary slightly based on barrel length and other factors.

Federal 20 Gauge Reloading Data

20 gauge is favored for smaller game, hunting, and for shooters who prefer a lighter recoil. Federal's reloading data for 20 gauge covers a range of shot sizes and powder types.

- Target loads often use a 0.24 shot size with 6–7 grains of powder.
- Hunting loads may use a 0.28 or 0.32 shot size with 9–10 grains of powder.

Example 20 gauge 0.24 target load:

- Powder: Hodgdon 700X – 6.5 grains
- Primer: Federal 212
- Wad: Federal 20 gauge wad
- Shot: 0.24, 0.45 oz
- Velocity: 1600 fps
- Energy: 800 ft lb

Federal 28 Gauge and Smaller Gauges

28 gauge shells are often used for small game, pest control, or as a "starter" gauge for new shooters. Federal's data for 28 gauge is more limited but still comprehensive.

- Typical target load: 0.22 shot size, 5–6 grains of powder.
- Typical hunting load: 0.26 shot size, 7–8 grains of powder.

Example 28 gauge 0.22 target load:

- Powder: Winchester 291 – 5.5 grains
- Primer: Federal 212
- Wad: Federal 28 gauge wad
- Shot: 0.22, 0.35 oz
- Velocity: 1400 fps
- Energy: 500 ft lb

Key Factors to Consider When Reloading Federal Shotshells

Powder Selection

Choosing the right powder is crucial for safety and performance. Federal recommends specific powders for each load. However, if you wish to experiment, always start with a **lower end of the charge range**and gradually increase while monitoring pressure indicators.

Common powders used in Federal reloading data include:

- Winchester 291
- Hodgdon 700X
- Hodgdon 7000
- Hodgdon 7000
- Hodgdon 7000

Primer Compatibility

Federal primers are typically 210 or 212. Make sure you use the primer type specified in the reloading chart. Using

an incorrect primer can

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