

Ammo and Firearm Shortage

People are wondering why there is an ammo and firearm shortage. There are wild stories that the government is hoarding the ammo, that the manufacturers are not producing enough, and when they do, it gets sent to secret bunkers. This should put all the conspiracy theories to rest and examine the real causes for the current shortage, as they are many, as well as being intertwined.

First of all, there is the Covid-19 Pandemic. The pandemic basically shut down the earth for several weeks. Manufacturing was shut down. Shipping was shut down: shipping not only finished goods to the supply chain, but also raw materials needed in the manufacturing process. Add to this the fact that the Obama Administration shut down lead mining in the US, so we have to import our lead, which not only drives up the cost, but when ports are shut down, no materials can be sourced.

Another factor to consider is that every time there is an emergency, a presidential election, or an economic downturn, people buy guns and ammo. Each of these three factors happened in 2020, sending people in droves to buy any firearm and any ammo they can locate.

Our emergency was the C19 pandemic and its complete uncertainty about what would happen. The presidential election where many of the candidates openly flaunted their disdain for the Second Amendment and have stated their intentions to place a 100% tax on each box of ammunition and a \$500 tax on each firearm sold. The emergency caused a severe economic not only downturn, but near shutdown.

Starting a manufacturing plant is not like getting up in the morning and flipping on a light switch. It takes several days to restart a plant, and this is after you have the materials on hand. Most of the imported materials are sitting in ports of entry awaiting inspection and clearing Customs. Current estimates are four to six weeks lag existing.

Add to these usual factors and now enter the riots of the summer of 2020 which Democratic leaders in certain cities thrust upon their citizenry making them fearful of their safety. This translates to more and more people attempting to buy a firearm.

The National Shooting Sports Foundation estimates 8.3 million new gun owners purchased firearms in 2020. This 8.4 million are first time buyers, 45% of whom are women. If each of these new owners simply purchased three boxes of cartridges with their new gun, that would be an additional 25 million boxes needed just to stay even with production, not taking into account the hoarding transpiring due to the current conditions.

There were 21 million new guns sold during 2020. This is a 60% increase in gun sales from the previous year of 2019. Again, if 21 million people purchase two or three boxes of ammo with their newly acquired gun, that's upwards of 60 million boxes of ammo needed just for the new guns, not including the firearms in use prior to 2020.

Many shooters and hunters have been surprised to learn they cannot just go to the range and find ammo readily available. The hunters getting ready for their hunting trip cannot simply stop by Academy



Sports or Cabelas and grab a few boxes of ammo as they have in the past. Most were not aware the main element seems to be unobtainium.

The ammo manufacturers are attempting to run their plants 24-7, however their workers are human and are subject to normal working conditions such as taking extra shifts, sickness, vacations, and lest we forget some have contracted C19 themselves, leaving a shortened workforce available to run the plant.

Also needing to be considered is the state in which the plant is located. If a plant is located in a state where the governor and/or legislature is anti-gun, they may have considered the plant and its employees not essential workers, and forced them to stay closed. Another de-facto attempt at denying the population Second Amendment rights.



Firearm manufacturing has some of the same hurdles as the ammunition manufacturing. Skilled workers are still needed, and again, they are human. The plant still needs raw materials which may be in short supply. Many of these manufacturing plants are outside the US, therefore adding another set of hurdles to get into the supply chain due to import restrictions.

Adding capacity to a plant is not as easy as hiring some additional workers to the staff. New buildings must be built, new machinery must be designed and built. New employees must be trained. This all takes time, not only for the acquisition of the property or the building itself, consider all the governmental intervention of zoning, permits and inspections, etc. It may take 12-18 months to get a plant built and operational.

No manufacturer or retailer is going to pass up an opportunity to sell a product to a customer. Likewise, no manufacturer or retailer is not going to seize an opportunity to sell more and more of their product when demand is significantly higher than normal. This is a dream come true - that is why they are in business. Smith & Wesson saw an increase of 102.2% in their sales for 2020.

