

Accuracy & Chronograph Data: .357 Magnum Ammunition

Winchester 110-grain .357 Magnum Semi-Jacketed Hollow Point	Taurus 605	Ruger SP101 KSP321
Average Velocity at 15 ft.	1151 fps	1136 fps
Standard Deviation	12 fps	23 fps
Power Factor	127	125
Smallest Group at 15 yds.	Malf.	3.2 in.
Largest Group Size	Malf.	4.1 in.
Average Group Size	Malf.	3.6 in.
Cor-Bon 140-grain .357 Magnum Jacketed Hollow Point	Taurus 605	Ruger SP101 KSP321
Average Velocity at 15 ft.	1151 fps	1110 fps
Standard Deviation	17 fps	27 fps
Power Factor	161	155
Smallest Group at 15 yds.	Malf.	2.7 in.
Largest Group Size	Malf.	3.4 in.
Average Group Size	Malf.	3.0 in.
Speer 158-grain .357 Magnum Gold Dot Jacketed Hollow Point	Taurus 605	Ruger SP101 KSP321
Average Velocity at 15 ft.	1122 fps	1090 fps
Standard Deviation	31 fps	32 fps
Power Factor	177	172
Smallest Group at 15 yds.	Malf.	2.6 in.
Largest Group Size	Malf.	4.2 in.
Average Group Size	Malf.	3.4 in.

NOTES

- Accuracy testing consisted of firing five consecutive 5-shot groups with each load.
- Power factor is computed by multiplying mass times velocity, that is, bullet weight times speed.
- Malf. means the gun would not fire the ammunition reliably.
- We didn't test the lead +P Winchester ammunition in the 342Ti because of factory warnings.

are polished and treated with a protective finish. Otherwise, the exposed metal in the individual chambers and cylinder face are susceptible to abrasion from common items such as sandpaper, crocus cloth, and Scotch Brite wheels.

Taurus 85UL .38 Special +P

Gun Tests Recommends: Like the Taurus 605, the 85UL's action locked up during testing, but the Ultra-Lite's problem went away as it broke in. If you can't afford the lighter Smiths, this gun is worth a look.

In the hand, the Taurus 85UL feels small. Its overall height is less than 4.5 inches, and the grip is very short. The grip measures 3 inches at the back and only 2 inches in the front. We found it can be hard to keep the

same grip for more than one shot.

When we first got the 85UL, the action seemed flawed, sometimes failing to release the hammer and trigger. This is reflected in the accuracy test results reported in the nearby tables. Still, by the end of the test this problem had disappeared. A burr or debris floating somewhere behind the sideplate likely caused this problem. The Taurus catalog says it is rated for +P ammunition. On the barrel it merely reads .38 Special, but the gun seemed to handle hotter ammo just fine.

At 17 ounces the \$330 Taurus 85UL is almost a half-pound lighter than the Taurus 605—but two S&W guns were even lighter. This gun, rated for .38 Special +P rounds, is handsome, with two different textures of satin stainless. The frame has a sand-blasted

look with raised lettering, and the full-lug shroud, crane, and cylinder share a smoother texture. The 2-inch barrel is obviously of different material than the shroud. Lighter guns provide the necessary strength at the "hot points," that is the barrel, cylinder, and breech-face. They save weight by surrounding these crucial areas with the latest alloy technology. Taurus refers to it as hammer-forged alloy. All together this is a very nice package with workmanship well above what would be considered acceptable at its price. The 85UL comes with a key lock that freezes the hammer, and this is the only gun in the test with single-action capability. The double action is the quick paced, damn-the-lock up action we have come to expect from Taurus revolvers. The action works against a coiled mainspring that gives very little feedback between resisting the trigger stroke and breaking the shot. Anyone pressing carefully, expecting to hear a chorus of lockup sounds before let-off, will be sadly disappointed.

To shoot any revolver well, the trick is to steady the sights throughout the trigger squeeze. A blackened front sight, which would have defined the blade in the rear sight-notch, would have helped us shoot the gun better, in our estimation.

S&W 642 .38 Special +P

Gun Tests Recommends: If any gun in this test is the reigning champion of concealment guns, this is it. We think the hammerless 642, \$460, is a good gun, though we would spend \$39 more to get the 342Ti.

Behind the Ti, the next-lightest revolver was the Smith & Wesson 642, which differs from the earlier 442 because it is rated for +P ammunition. Its 2-inch barrel looks longer because it is not shrouded, and there is only enough lug to capture the short ejector rod. The action in this Centennial Series gun is often referred to as hammerless, but this is only because the hammer does its work behind a closed frame that is perfect for deep concealment. Its finish is brushed stainless with a black anodized trigger. The ejector star is of the CNC va-