

I received this through sources at LASO:

Catastrophic Failure of Semiautomatic Handguns

The following bulletin was received from the New Jersey State Police - Officer Safety Division

Date: February 23, 2007

Continuous reloading and chambering of the same round may cause catastrophic failure in semiautomatic handguns.

The Security Force at the Los Alamos National Laboratory in Los Alamos, New Mexico, recently reported on the catastrophic failure of a semiautomatic handgun when it was fired. The internal explosion caused the frame to break while the slide and barrel separated from the weapon and traveled down range. No one was injured in the incident. An investigation revealed that security personnel were repeatedly charging the same round of ammunition into the chamber.

Technical personnel at Glock Inc. advise that repeated chambering of the same round may cause the bullet to move deeper in the casing, further compacting the propellant. When a normal cartridge is fired, the firing pin hits the primer, igniting the propellant. When the propellant burns, the gas pressure drives the bullet out of the case and down the barrel. However, if the propellant has been compacted, the pressure may increase beyond the gun's specifications, causing the weapon to break apart. Sigarms Inc's personnel confirm that reloading the same round five or six times will cause the problems, noting that reloading the same round even once will void their warranty. Both manufacturers stress that the problem is not with the gun, but with chambering the same round repeatedly.

The NJ Regional Operations Intelligence Center urges all law enforcement officers not to chamber the same round when loading their weapons.

For example, when you clean your weapon, most of us drop the magazine and then pull the slide back thereby ejecting the round in the barrel. After cleaning the weapon many of us will return the "same" round to the barrel that we initially extracted. Each time the slide slams forward on that same round it seats it deeper into the cartridge. Apparently, by seating the round deeper into the cartridge, it creates greater pressure when the round is intentionally detonated by a firing pin strike and is causing weapons to explode.