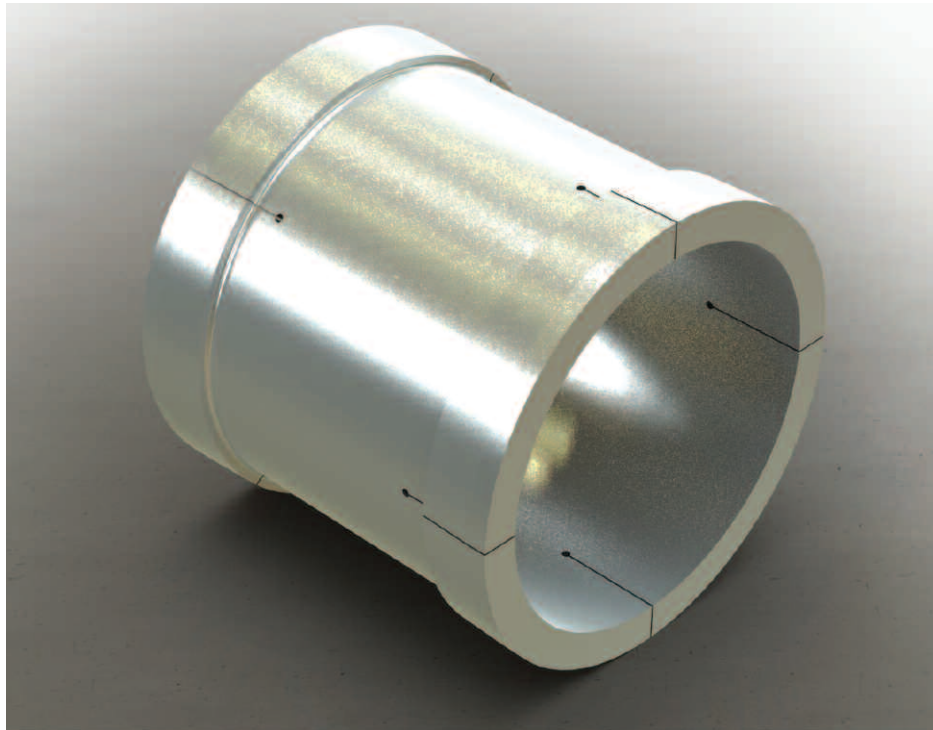


# CLEAN-OUT BLOCK



## Introduction

After each change of alloy, and also after every shift, a clean-out block should be used to remove the build-up of oxide skin from the liner of the container.

A dummy block that is working properly will leave approximately .005" (.25 mm) of aluminum on the inside of the liner. The clean out block should remove this, having zero clearance with the liner in the heated condition.

When ordering a clean-out block, it is important to accurately measure the current bore of the entire length of the container. Normally a container may be used for an extended period, but especially if hard alloys are being extruded, over time the actual diameter will increase.

Also, neither clean-out blocks nor dummy blocks can operate effectively if the container has become out of round, bellied, or gouged. Such containers should either be relined, or replaced.

## Billet Impurities

Through the ongoing development of metal treatment and casting technologies, the quality of aluminum alloy billets is

constantly improving. The outer skin of the billet, however, is inevitably oxidized, and often also marred by surface impurities and minor inclusions.

Aluminum's property of sticking to steel causes the oxide skin of the billet to remain fused to the interior surface of the container liner during extrusion. It is important to prevent this layer of tainted alloy from sliding forward towards the die.

## Forming the Butt

During the extrusion stroke, as the billet is pressed through the container, the flow into the die is from the centre of the billet. Oxides and other impurities from the skin then collect in a dead metal zone at the end of the container. Extrusion is stopped before this contaminated alloy is carried through the die into the product. It then forms the butt that adheres to the back of the die stack, and is discarded.

## The Dummy Block

Temperature control of both container and dummy block is critical for efficient extrusion. Taper heating of the

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billet, however, makes cooling of the dummy block no longer necessary.

The amount of expansion of the dummy block is carefully calculated and controlled in order to leave a thin film of alloy, or "skull", on the liner of the container, as the dummy block shears the metal during its forward stroke.

The container then has a residual built-up oxide layer prior to the next billet being loaded. After billet upset, the oxide layer of the new billet mixes with the previous layer left in the container. When the alloy is changed, there is then a possibility of contamination. This can result in defects in surface finish, or in structural properties.

The dummy block should never remove the skull completely, because it separates the outer surface of the dummy block from the liner of the container. If there is no alloy left, it usually indicates that the dummy block is not contracting on the return stroke. Scrap from the skin of the billet being extruded, as well as blisters and other defects in the product, will result.

### **The Castool Clean-out Block**

The Castool Clean-out Block has been designed for maximum efficiency in cleaning the liner wall. The block is long enough to sit on the billet loader and travel through the liner smoothly. It is made to be used at room temperature to make handling safer and to achieve better dimensional control. The block is made hollow to reduce weight and wire cut at both ends to allow it to flex slightly and retain contact with the liner wall.

Once the customer has supplied the minimum container liner diameter at room temperature and the operating temperature of the liner during operation, Castool applies the thermal expansion factors for both the liner and the clean-out block to calculate the best diameter for the cold clean-out.

The Castool clean-out block is precisely sized to meet the requirements of each individual container, and to remove the maximum amount of skull, without abrading the liner wall.

