Why Ammo Prices Are Rising — Fall 2026

Cost evidence pack · public market data · prepared September 10, 2026

Everything below is public, citable market data — built for blog and email content. The short version: the two raw inputs in every cartridge case and bullet jacket (copper) and the cost of moving heavy freight (diesel) are both at or near record levels, and component makers have started passing it through.

Copper — the metal every round is made of

Cartridge brass is roughly 70% copper, and jacketed or plated bullets wrap lead in copper. When copper moves, ammunition follows — it just takes a few months to reach the shelf.

Timeframe	Copper (approx.)	Where it is now	Change
Today (Sep 9, 2026)	$6.70-6.77 / lb	near the all-time high	—
1 month ago	~$6.55 / lb	record run to ~$6.83 in Aug	+~3%
3 months ago (June)	~$6.30 / lb		+~7%
6 months ago (March)	~$6.00 / lb		+~13%
1 year ago (Sep 2025)	~$4.50 / lb		+~49%

- Copper set its all-time record this summer (~$6.83/lb in August) and is holding within a few percent of it.
- Drivers: South American mine production problems, surging demand from data centers and grid buildouts, and tariff uncertainty — none of which resolve quickly. Analyst forecasts point to ~$7.24 within 12 months.
- Primer manufacturers are already passing it through: White River Energetics issued a price increase effective September 1, 2026, citing copper directly (their letter includes the one-year chart — +46% at the time it was written).

Diesel — every component ships heavy

Brass, lead, and powder move by truck, and they're some of the heaviest freight per dollar in retail. Diesel is the quiet second tax on every case of ammo.

Timeframe	US on-highway diesel		Change
Aug 31, 2026 (EIA)	$5.60 / gallon	on track for a 2026 record	—
1 year ago	~$3.73 / gallon		+$1.87 (+50%)

- Diesel is up roughly 50% year-over-year per EIA weekly data — a bigger percentage move than copper — and industry coverage this week is calling 2026 a record year for diesel prices.
- That surcharge lands on every leg: raw copper to the brass mill, brass to the loader, loaded ammo to the warehouse, and the box to your door.

Brass — tracking the copper record

- Cartridge brass is ~70% copper, so case prices follow the copper chart with a short lag. In practice this year: 9mm case brass is up 21% since spring, and 5.56 brass is up 10% — with copper still at record levels, there's no relief signal in the input.
- Powder has moved too — propellant pricing has stepped up through 2026 alongside everything else in the supply chain.

Bullets — the third letter this year

- Berry's Bullets (St. George, UT) issued updated OEM manufacturer pricing effective July 8, 2026 — plated bullets are copper-jacketed lead, so both of their raw inputs have been climbing all year.

- What that looks like in practice: 9mm 115gr bullets went up $3.50 per thousand — from ~$53.44 to $56.94, a 6.5% jump on the highest-volume bullet in America. And on one .30-cal subsonic SKU alone, bullet cost is up $35 per thousand for October — roughly a 22% increase on a single component of a single round.
- That makes it three separate component suppliers repricing in 2026: bullets (Berry's, July), primers (White River Energetics, September 1), and brass tracking record copper. Every part of a loaded round now costs more than it did in spring.

From the manufacturer — quotable

“For the past six months we've held our pricing flat while copper climbed to record highs and freight costs rose with it — we absorbed the increases ourselves rather than passing them on. It's reached the point where we can't absorb that percentage anymore. Component and transportation costs have permanently reset, and pricing adjusts October 1.”

— attribute as “our manufacturing partner,” September 2026

Story angles for content

- “The metal in your magazine just set an all-time record” — copper at record highs, +49% in a year, with the WRE primer letter as the receipts.
- “Ammo prices rise every fall — this year there's a reason” — seasonal demand plus a genuine input-cost wave, not just habit.
- “Why smart shooters are stocking up now” — increases announced for October 1; current pricing holds through September.
- “The $1.87 diesel tax on your range day” — the freight angle nobody covers.

Sources

Copper: TradingEconomics commodity copper (spot, monthly/yearly change, drivers, forecast); MetalCharts/COMEX HG quotes; White River Energetics price adjustment letter, Aug 26, 2026 (1-yr copper chart, Sept 1 increase). Diesel: EIA weekly on-highway diesel via IndexBox summary, Sep 1, 2026; Forbes, “Why Diesel Is On Track To Set A 2026 Price Record,” Sep 9, 2026. Interim copper levels (3/6-month) read from the 1-year chart in the WRE letter — approximate.