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How to Measure Depth with a Gauge or Caliper

Depth is measured with a depth micrometer, the depth rod on a slide caliper, or a dial indicator.

Which tool

Tool	What it measures	Source
Slide caliper with depth rod	Outside and inside dimensions, and the depth of blind holes	H-30B p. 11-25
Depth micrometer	One of four micrometer types; read the same way as an outside micrometer	H-30B p. 11-19
Dial indicator	Variations in a surface, with a probe linked to a dial reading thousandths of an inch (or an LCD)	H-30B p. 11-24
Depth gauges in corrosion inspection	Named among the tools used during visual inspection for corrosion, with mirrors and optical micrometers	H-30B Ch. 8

Typical mistakes

Mistake	What happens	Fix
Base not square to the surface	Reads deeper or shallower than the truth	Seat flat, hold square
Too much pressure on the rod	Compresses a soft surface, sprung tool	Light, steady pressure
Skipping calibration	Systematic error	Check against a known gauge first
Judging a limit from memory	Wrong decision	Take the limit from the repair data

Key points

- **Not approved data.** Depth limits for corrosion, dents and countersinks come from the SRM, not from this page.
- **No procedure for zeroing.** The FAA handbooks do not describe one for depth tools; follow the maker.
- **Few figures.** The sources give the tools but few numbers, so this page has few.

SOURCES · FAA-H-8083-30B, AMT Handbook: General

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theaviationpoint.com/standard-practices/tools/depth-gauge/

Educational reference only, not approved data. Always consult the applicable SRM, AMM, or AC 43.13-1B and your certifying authority.

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