

Best SDS-Max Rotary Hammer 2026

QUICK REFERENCE | DEWALT vs MILWAUKEE vs BOSCH vs MAKITA

Quick answer: Once anchors or rebar dowels exceed 1", you need SDS-Max — SDS-Plus tops out at 1-1/8" and isn't built for sustained chipping or core drilling. All four tools below are matched in the same 1-9/16" chuck class for a fair comparison.

Real Specs by Brand

Feature	DeWalt DCH481	Milwaukee 2717-20	Bosch GBH18V-36CN	Makita XRH07
Chuck size	1-9/16"	1-9/16"	1-9/16"	1-9/16"
Impact energy	6.1 J	~6.8 J (5 ft-lbs)	7.0 J (5.2 ft-lbs)	Category-leading*
Weight (bare)	11.9 lbs	12.15 lbs	11.3-13.4 lbs	16.8 lbs
Battery platform	60V FLEXVOLT	M18	18V PROFACTOR	18V LXT
Vibration (drilling)	9.4 m/s ²	10 m/s ²	Not published (US)	5 m/s ²

*Independent hands-on test result, not a published manufacturer figure. Bosch does not publish a vibration spec for this model on its U.S. pages.

Vibration Exposure Reference (EU formula, published test data)

Tool	Reaches 2.5 m/s ² (Action Value)	Reaches 5.0 m/s ² (Limit Value)
DeWalt DCH481	~34 min	~2h 16m
Milwaukee 2717-20	~30 min	~2h
Makita XRH07	~2h	~8h (a full shift)

Reference figures only, based on each tool's own published vibration test data run through the standard EU exposure formula $A(8) = a_{ms} \times \sqrt{(T/8)}$. Not a literal safety limit for any individual; the US has no equivalent enforceable OSHA limit.

SDS-Max vs SDS-Plus: Do You Need It?

Move up to SDS-Max if: anchor/rebar diameter exceeds 1" • you're coring holes larger than 1-1/8" • you do sustained chipping or light demolition • you're setting rebar dowels (#5-#9 bar). Stay on SDS-Plus for anchors 1/4"-1" (wedge, sleeve, Tapcon) — that covers most residential and light-commercial work.

Wet vs Dry Core Drilling

Carbide core bits run hammer + rotate, work dry, generate real silica dust. **Diamond core bits** need rotation-only mode for a clean cut and reasonable bit life — not every SDS-Max tool supports it, confirm before buying. **Wet coring** is better for deep or reinforced concrete (cools the bit, controls dust/slurry, extends bit life). **Dry coring** suits occasional holes or work near live electrical, but requires a HEPA vacuum with a dust shroud under OSHA's Table 1 silica rule — not just a dust mask.

Recommended Models at a Glance

Brand	Model	Best If...
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DeWalt	DCH481	Already on 20V/60V FLEXVOLT
Milwaukee	2717-20	Already on M18 -- largest cordless ecosystem
Bosch	GBH18V-36CN	Best power-to-weight ratio
Makita	XRH07	Best vibration control, independently test-verified

Need more power than any of these four? Hilti's Nuron TE 60-22 is the professional benchmark this category is measured against, at a significantly higher price point.

Common Mistakes

Buying a diamond core bit without checking for rotation-only mode

Not every SDS-Max tool has it, unlike SDS-Plus where it's standard. Confirm before buying.

Forcing SDS-Max bits into an SDS-Plus chuck

18mm vs 10mm shanks are not compatible in either direction.

Buying SDS-Max “just in case”

Heavier and pricier than SDS-Plus for no benefit if you never drill anchors over 1".

Starting a second battery ecosystem for one tool

These run \$300-600+ bare. Buy on the platform you already own.