

HAZARD ALERT

NAIL GUNS CAN INJURE OR KILL

A carpenter suffered a puncture wound to his neck when another worker's nail gun unexpectedly fired. The injured worker was bracing a ladder below his partner who was lowering the gun with his finger close to the trigger. When the injured worker began to stand up, the nail gun came into contact with the back of his neck, setting it off and resulting in the injury.

An experienced worker was installing a floor joist with two other workers when his nail gun caused an injury to his right femur. As he climbed up a stepladder with his finger on the trigger, the nail gun's cord hit the bottom of the joist and the nozzle of the tool made contact with the injured worker's pants, firing a nail into his leg.

Nail guns can save both time and labour, but injuries associated with these tools are often serious and can be fatal. Operators, co-workers and other people in the vicinity are at risk of injury. Hands and fingers are particularly vulnerable.

Recommended Preventive Action

- Review the owner's manual carefully. Train on safe operating procedures, proper body placement and correct PPE use, including safety glasses with side shields and hearing protection.
- Permit only trained and experienced workers to operate pneumatic nailing and stapling tools.

Inspect tools before connecting to the air supply:

- NEVER use defective tools. If a tool is malfunctioning, tag it and take it out of service.
- Check safety mechanisms if applicable. Never remove or bypass safety devices such as the nose guard contact springs.
- Always use a work-contacting element that limits the contact area to one as small as practicable.
- Ensure screws and cylinder caps are securely tightened.
- Inspect replacement nails for bent nails before inserting them into the gun.
- Use only compressed air to power the tool, do not use bottled gas. Do not exceed the manufacturer's specified air pressure and never exceed 120 psi.

Safely operate the pneumatic nailing and stapling tools by ensuring that you:

- Do not secure the trigger in the ON position.
- Carry the tool by the handle only and never walk around with your finger on the trigger.
- Never rest the gun against any part of your body, or try to climb a ladder with the gun cradled against your body.
- Never point a nail gun at others. Exercise extreme caution when using an air tool around other people. Position yourself (especially your free hand) out of the line of fire. Watch for co-workers behind the nailing surface.
- Do not operate the tool around flammables.
- Ask for a nail gun with a sequential trigger mechanism, where appropriate.
- Do not fire the tool unless the nose is firmly pressed against a work piece.
- Do not overreach when using the tool.
- Avoid nailing into knots and metal; nails are more likely to ricochet. Dense materials, like laminated beams, are also difficult to nail.
- Remember to disconnect the gun when leaving it unattended, when performing maintenance, when moving to another work area, or when clearing jams.

