



Tool Safety

eSafetyLine

Nail Gun Safety

Pneumatic nail guns are fast and easy to use and have just about replaced hammers as the tool of choice at most construction job sites, but they have also created new safety hazards. NIOSH states that there are about 37,000 nail gun injuries each year, that's about 10,000 EVERY day. Eighty-seven percent of nail gun injuries that are treated in an emergency room are puncture wounds or open wounds with an embedded object. Workers are often hit by a nail or fastener, one of the tool's attachments, or by flying wood or concrete chips. It is also common for a nail to go through the construction material into the injured person.

Nail gun accidents can easily be prevented when workers learn and practice proper nail gun use. Most injuries occur because of how the tool is used, not the tool itself. Discussion with workers of the following quick tips for using nail guns safely can help reduce the chance of nail gun injuries:

- Only operate a nail gun if you have been properly trained to do so, and read the manufacturers instructions and warnings first.
- Inspect the tool before each use.
- Always wear safety glasses, a hard hat and appropriate hearing protection.
- Keep guards and other safety devices on nail guns working in accordance with the manufacturers' recommendations.
- Always assume that the nail gun is loaded and contains fasteners. Never point the tool at yourself or others in the work area and keep hands and feet away from the firing head during use.

- Never carry the tool with your finger on or near the trigger; always remove your finger from the trigger when not driving nails or fasteners.
- Drive nails/fasteners into the work surface only, never into materials that are too hard to penetrate.
- Remove all nails/fasteners from the tool before connecting it to the air compressor and do not exceed the manufacturers' recommended working air pressure rating.
- Securely fasten the air hose to the tool to prevent it from becoming disconnected.

Now a quick case study to "drive the point home". On 5 March 2002 an employee climbed an 8-foot step ladder that had a pneumatic nail gun on the top step. When his chest reached the top step the nail gun shot an eight penny nail into his chest. He was transported to the hospital where he stayed for 9 days. This accident could have been easily prevented in several different ways. A loaded nail gun should never be left attended, especially if loaded and ready to be fired. The nail gun should not have been on the ladder facing someone climbing it. It also appears that the safety devices that were in place to help prevent such an accident had been removed.

Discussion Questions

How many nail gun accidents happen daily?

Why is hearing protection needed when using a nail gun?

MEETING / TRAINING ATTENDANCE ROSTER

COMPANY: _____

_____ SAFETY MEETING

JOB/DEPT: _____

_____ SAFETY TRAINING

DATE: ___/___/___

TIME: _____

TOPICS ADDRESSED: _____

EMPLOYEE'S SIGNATURES

_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____

EMPLOYEE SUGGESTIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS: _____

ACTION TAKEN: _____

Supervisor's Signature

_____/_____/_____
Date

Safety Coordinator's Signature

_____/_____/_____
Date