A Dozen Ways to Help Workers Avoid Nail Gun Injuries

According to emergency room statistics, air nailer injuries are up. One reason for the increase in injuries is because these tools are more readily available for home use. But still a great number of workers are being injured by nail guns at work.

Remind your workers to use air nailers safely at work and safely at home.

Pneumatic Nailers

Pneumatic nailers – also known as nailers, pneumatic hammers and air-powered hammers – are a staple of the construction industry. Powered by compressed air, these tools are rightly called guns because they apply a large amount of energy to a small projectile. As such, they should be treated and handled with the same kind of care as a weapon. These tools have caused many injuries to workers' hands and feet, and even more serious injuries to the eyes, neck, heart, and brain.

Here's an example of how things can go wrong when nail guns are used incorrectly:

A worker known to be fast at his job was walking along a timber framework placing a series of nails. He used one hand to hold the job and walked with the nailer's trigger depressed, using the pressure on the muzzle guard to activate the tool. He nailed his hand to the wood.

12 Safety Tips to Prevent Air Nailer Injuries

To avoid being injured by nail guns, here are a dozen safety tips to follow:

1. Read the user's manual to learn how to operate and maintain the tool safely.
2. Get proper safety training at work on how to safely use the

tool.

3. Examine the tool before use, making sure it is in good condition. For example, is the nose guard in working order?
4. Check the air pressure before hooking it up.
5. Don’t carry the tool by the hose.
6. Don’t carry the tool with a finger on the trigger.
7. Don’t press the trigger unless you are intending to fire.
8. Never point the tool at anyone. Even if the tool is disconnected from the air supply or supposedly empty, it could still fire under certain circumstances. It’s also possible for a nail gun to go off without you touching the trigger.
9. Make sure the tool is pointed away from your body and keep your hands out of the way. Remember that nails hitting the work at the wrong angle can bounce off and injure your hands.
10. Put the muzzle of the tool firmly against the work piece when firing.
11. Disconnect the tool from the air supply before:
    - Clearing blockages,
    - Making adjustments,
    - Handing the tool to another worker, or
    - Leaving it unattended.
12. Always wear safety glasses when using an air nailer. Hearing protection, head protection and safety-toed footwear might also be required.

Conclusion

Besides training and supervising your workers to use nail guns safely, you can prevent injuries by choosing nail guns designed for safety. These include the sequential nailers that require the nose of the tool to be pressed before the trigger is pulled.

Pneumatic nailers are among many kinds of equipment powered by compressed air. All these tools require caution to prevent injuries.