

Shared Tagging Guns and Bloodborne Disease Risk

Handheld tagging guns, also known as swiftachers or swift-taggers, are used in retail to attach price tags or other tags to clothing, accessories, and household goods. Tagging guns have a hollow needle to penetrate material and to deliver a plastic thread fastener, which attaches the paper tag to the retail item. Injuries from the needle ("needlesticks") are common in retail workers who use tagging guns. *Therefore, when tagging guns are shared, workers may be exposed to pathogens (disease causing agents such as viruses or bacteria) that are spread through blood ("bloodborne infections").*

**HEALTH
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Bloodborne infections are caused by pathogens that are spread through contact with an infected person's blood. Bloodborne infections include **hepatitis B**, **hepatitis C**, and **human immunodeficiency virus (HIV)**. Although these are serious infections, treatment is available if testing shows that you are infected. There is also a vaccine available that you can take to prevent hepatitis B infection.

To prevent bloodborne pathogen exposure while using a handheld tagging gun

EMPLOYERS SHOULD:

- ▶ Issue individual tagging guns to workers that are labeled with the worker's name.
- ▶ Provide a locker or other secure space for workers to store their tagging guns when not using them.
- ▶ Provide an appropriate biohazard waste container for disposal of used needles.
- ▶ Instruct workers to report needlestick injuries to their supervisor.
- ▶ Provide worker training in the safe use of tagging guns.
- ▶ Provide worker training about bloodborne pathogens.
- ▶ Be familiar with the Cal/OSHA Bloodborne Pathogen Standard.
- ▶ Have an Injury and Illness Prevention Program.

WORKERS SHOULD:

- ▶ Avoid sharing their tagging gun with coworkers.
- ▶ Label tagging gun with their name.
- ▶ Store their tagging gun in a secure space when not using it.
- ▶ Handle only their own tagging gun needles.
- ▶ Dispose of their own used needles in an appropriate red biohazard waste container.

If a tagging gun must be shared, workers should:

- ▶ Never lend a tagging gun to a coworker with a needle loaded.
- ▶ Always make sure the prior user removes the used needle if a tagging gun is borrowed.
- ▶ Report tagging gun injuries to their supervisor immediately.

Source: <https://www.cdph.ca.gov>