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HEALTH & SAFETY NEWS

Published for Carpenters and Employers, in all Crafts,
Covered by the Workers' Compensation Addendum

When Working with Nail Guns... Continued

1. Use the Right Trigger. Research shows that a full sequential trigger nail gun is the safest trigger option. Nail guns with contact trip triggers can double your risk for injury compared to sequential triggers. According to the research, they also do not save you time overall.

Time saved depends more on the skills of the nail gun user than the trigger mechanism. If you do not know how to use a nail gun properly you can be injured with either trigger. Ask your employer for training on using nail guns safely to reduce your risk for injury. Use a sequential trigger.

A few minutes a day can prevent nail gun injuries.

2. Wear Personal Protective Equipment (PPE). When using a nail gun, wear:

- ◆ A hard hat
- ◆ Safety glasses manufactured as Z87+
- ◆ Steel-toe footwear
- ◆ Hearing Protection

3. Use Safe Work Practices. When using a nail gun, NEVER:

- ◆ Press the trigger unless the nose of the gun is pressed firmly against the work surface.
- ◆ Point it at yourself or other people.
- ◆ Carry it around with your finger on the trigger.
- ◆ Use a broken or modified trigger. Do Not remove or tamper with the spring in the workpiece contact.
- ◆ Use the hose for hoisting or lowering the nail gun.
- ◆ Clean, clear jams, or adjust it when it is connected to the air supply.

Use a hammer if you cannot reach the work while holding the nail gun with your dominant hand!

For more information on Nail Gun Safety visit www.cpwr.com



NAIL GUNS

What's the Problem? Nail guns are popular for a reason. They get the job done more quickly. But that rapid-fire action can just as quickly result in an injury, or worse.

Nail gun injuries are more common than people think. Most injuries involve puncture wounds to hands or fingers, but serious, even fatal injuries have happened when a nail enters the head or other parts of the body.

It's not just nail gun users who are at risk. People nearby have also been injured by nails being misfired.

How Do Nail Guns Work? There are many types of nail guns. Most are pneumatic, meaning they are powered by compressed air. Pneumatic nail guns are typically triggered by a contact trip trigger or sequential trigger. These triggers look the same, but the risks are different.

- ♣️ **Contact Trip Triggers** fire any time the trigger and the nose of the gun – the contact element—are both depressed. The trigger can be held down to allow “bump firing.”
- ♣️ **Sequential Triggers** require the nose of the gun to be depressed before the trigger can be pulled and the nail released. This helps avoid the accidental firing of nails.
- ♣️ **Dual Triggers** allow you to switch back and forth from a contact trip trigger to a sequential trigger. Confusing the two can lead to injuries.
- ♣️ **How Do I Know Which Trigger I'm Using?** All triggers look alike. If you don't know whether you have a contact trip or sequential trigger nail gun, test it before using. If you can “bump fire” by holding the trigger down and bouncing the nose of the gun along the workpiece to fire nails, you are using a contact trip trigger.

How Do Injuries Happen? Most nail gun injuries result from:

- **Accidental or unintended firing, often when the nail gun recoils after firing;**
- **Holding finger on contact trigger when the nose is not firmly against the work surface;**
- **Ricocheting or airborne nails;**
- **Nail going through work surface;**
- **Bypassed safety features, or**
- **Awkward nailing positions.**

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HEALTHY HABITS TO PREVENT THE FLU

TIPS TO REDUCE THE RISK OF SEASONAL FLU

The single best way to reduce the risk of seasonal flu and its potentially serious complications is to get vaccinated each year, but practice actions like avoiding people who are sick, covering your cough and washing your hands also can help stop the spread of germs and prevent respiratory illnesses like flu.

- ◆ **Avoid close contact with people who are sick.** When you are sick, keep your distance from others to protect them from getting sick, too.
- ◆ **Stay home when you are sick.** If possible, stay home when you are sick, and return to your normal activities when for at least 24 hours, your symptoms are getting better overall, and you have not had fever (and are not using fever-reducing medication).
- ◆ **Cover your mouth and nose when coughing or sneezing.** Wearing a mask is an added prevention.
- ◆ **Clean your hands often will help protect you from germs.** If soap and water are not available, use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer.
- ◆ **Avoid touching your eyes, nose, or mouth.** Germs can be spread when a person touches something that is contaminated with germs and then touches his or her eyes, nose, or mouth.
- ◆ **Take steps for cleaner air.** You can improve air quality by bringing in fresh outdoor air, purifying indoor air or gathering outdoors. Cleaner air reduces the risk of exposure to viruses.
- ◆ **Practice good hygiene and other healthy habits.** Cleaning frequently touched surfaces, such as countertops, handrails, and doorknobs regularly can help prevent the spread of germs. Get lots of sleep, be physically active, manage stress, drink plenty of fluids, and eat nutritious food.

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PROMOTE HEART HEALTH

Heart Month is celebrated throughout the month of February. February is chosen because it is a time when many people reflect on matters of the heart, including love and relationships. It is a fitting opportunity to also emphasize the importance of heart health. Improving heart health involves making conscious choices to reduce risk factors and adopt heart-healthy habits. Here are some ways to promote heart health for Heart Month and beyond:

- ♣️ **Eat a Balanced Diet:** Consume a diet rich in fruits, vegetables, whole grains, lean proteins, and low-fat dairy products. Limit saturated and trans fats, sodium, and added sugars.
- ♣️ **Exercise Regularly:** Engage in physical activity for at least 150 minutes per week. Activities like walking, cycling, and swimming can improve cardiovascular fitness.
- ♣️ **Quit Smoking:** If you smoke, seek support to quit smoking. Smoking is a major risk factor for heart disease.
- ♣️ **Manage Stress:** Practice stress-reduction techniques such as mindfulness, meditation, or yoga to reduce the impact of stress on your heart.
- ♣️ **Monitor Blood Pressure:** Check your blood pressure regularly and work with your healthcare provider to manage it within a health range.
- ♣️ **Control Cholesterol:** Maintain healthy cholesterol levels by following a heart-healthy diet and, if necessary, taking prescribed medications.
- ♣️ **Maintain a Healthy Weight:** Achieve and maintain a healthy weight through a combination of balanced eating and regular physical activity.
- ♣️ **Limit Alcohol Consumption:** If you consume alcohol, do so in moderation. Excessive alcohol consumption can contribute to heart problems.
- ♣️ **Get Adequate Sleep:** Aim for 7-9 hours of quality sleep per night to support heart health.

www.heart.org

SAFETY ERGONOMICS

1. **Choose tools that are more ergonomically correct.** Make sure that vibration from power tools is kept at a minimum. Choose tools that are as light as possible to reduce the force needed to use them. Choose tools that are well balanced, so you are not expending extra energy trying to hold the tool in place. Make sure that the tool handle allows you to hold it comfortably.
2. **Avoid bending at the waist for prolonged periods of time.** Raise the work, if possible, on two sawhorses or a bench. Sit on a stable stool if you must work at ground level.
3. **Balance your tool belt.** A tool belt that is heavier on one side than the other when worn all day call pull your back out of alignment. This forces the muscles on the unloaded side to work harder. Don't carry more than you need to and don't wear a tool belt at all if you don't need to. Remember to take off your tool belt during breaks to give your body a rest.
4. **Don't twist from the waist while working.** Repeated twisting of the lower back during lifting or shoveling is a common mistake. Instead, lift your feet and turn your hips and body in that direction when shoveling, moving blocks, etc.
5. **If you must lift, lift safely.** You know the drill but here's a reminder. Plan the lift and test the load. Get help. Use a buddy or material handling equipment. Keep the load close. Tighten you stomach muscles as you lift. Lift with your legs and keep your back straight. Lower the load the same way.
6. **Minimize overhead work.** Overhead lifting and reaching causes the back to arch. Excessive arching places stress on the small joints of the spine and places additional strain on the neck and shoulders. If you must work overhead, get as close to your work as possible by standing on a platform or ladder. Take frequent breaks by lowering your hands and periodically bending forward with your hands on your knees to stretch out your back.
7. **Keep your wrists and arms in neutral.** Working with your wrist bent either back or forward increases the chances that you'll develop problems. Avoid working with your arms outstretched, if possible; this puts more strain on your body. And if you develop pain, swelling, tingling, and signs of an overuse injury, take the time to rest. Trying to work in pain will only make it worse.
8. **Push rather than pull.** Pushing loads allows you to maintain the natural curves in your back and reduces twisting. Just make sure you can see over the load!
9. **Use good techniques when shoveling.** Keep your feet wide apart with your front foot close to shovel. Put bottom hand low toward the blade. Shift weight to the rear foot. Keep the load close to your body. Turn your feet in the direction of the throw of your load. Try changing your grip or the direction of throw periodically, to avoid continually loading the same soft tissues.
10. **Identify Difficult Jobs.** Because of the variety of tasks in the construction industry, it is important to identify tasks that require one or more of the above risk factors. Asking why these risk factors are there, tasks can then be retooled, or the work practices modified to reduce risk.

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