

SAFETY AWARENESS

Brief Topic Safety Refresher Training For Associates

2024

Pneumatic Nail Gun Safety

Nail guns are powerful, easy to operate, and boost productivity for nailing tasks. They are also responsible for an estimated 37,000 emergency room visits each year. Severe nail gun injuries have led to construction worker deaths.

Nail gun injuries are common in residential construction. More than half of reported nail gun injuries are to the hand and fingers. One quarter of these hand injuries involve structural damage to tendons, joints, nerves, and bones. After hands, the next most often injured are the leg, knee, thigh, foot, and toes. Less common are injuries to the forearm or wrist, head and neck, and trunk. Serious nail gun injuries to the spinal cord, head, neck, eye, internal organs, and bones have been reported. Injuries have resulted in paralysis, blindness, brain damage, bone fractures, and death.

Nail Gun Injuries

There are seven major risk factors that can lead to a nail gun injury. Understanding them will help you to prevent injuries on your jobsites.

- Unintended nail discharge from double fire.
- Unintended nail discharge from knocking the safety contact with the trigger squeezed.
- Nail penetration through lumber work piece.
- Nail ricochet after striking a hard surface or metal feature.
- Missing the work piece.
- Awkward position nailing.
- Bypassing safety mechanisms.

Six Steps to Nail Gun Safety

1. Use the full sequential trigger

- The full sequential trigger is always the safest trigger mechanism for the job. It reduces the risk of unintentional nail discharge and double fires—including injuries from bumping into co-workers.
- Consider restricting inexperienced employees to full sequential trigger nail guns starting out. Some contractors using more than one type of trigger on their jobs color-code the nail guns so that the type of trigger can be readily identified by workers and supervisors.

2. Provide training

- Both new and experienced workers can benefit from safety training to learn about the causes of nail gun injuries and specific steps to reduce them. Be sure that training is provided in a manner that employees can understand.

3. Provide Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)

- Hard hats, High Impact eye protection, Hearing protection.

4. Encourage reporting and discussion of injuries and close calls

- Studies show that many nail gun injuries go unreported. Employers should ensure that their policies and practices encourage reporting of nail gun injuries. Reporting helps ensure that employees get medical attention (see #6 below). It also helps contractors to identify unrecognized job site risks that could lead to additional injuries if not addressed. Injuries and close calls provide teachable moments that can help improve crew safety.

