



# Safety Tip of the Week

*Your Safety Is Our Business®*

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## Powder-Actuated Hand Tools

Whenever you operate a powder-actuated hand tool, safe work practices must always be followed. These tools are designed to drive nails or other fastening devices into material such as concrete, steel, and masonry, which are not easily penetrated. These devices use explosive charges similar to a firearm. Since the charge is similar to a firearm, powder actuated tools can “fire” nails and fastening devices into human flesh. Great respect for these tools and the safety precautions for them must be maintained. Only qualified persons who have been trained and certified by an authorized instructor can use a powder-actuated.

### Safe practices for powder-actuated tools:

- Before use, the operator must inspect to verify that the tool is clean, all moving parts operate freely, the barrel is free from obstructions, and correct shields, guards, or safety attachments recommended by the manufacturer are in place.
- NEVER point a powder-actuated tool at anyone, whether it is loaded or unloaded! Handle as you would a firearm.
- A powder-actuated tool should never be loaded until it is ready for use.
- Any defective or poorly working tool should be immediately removed from service and tagged as unsafe.
- Always wear proper personal protective equipment (PPE) when operating powder-actuated tools.
- Powder-actuated tools should not be used in areas where flammable or combustible atmospheres may be present – the tool is a source of ignition and could cause an explosion.
- When operating a powder-actuated tool, press and hold the tool firmly against the surface into which the fastening device is being driven.
- Never drive a fastener into a “spalled” or chipped surface, such as an uneven area where a previous fastening was unsatisfactory.
- Never shoot a fastener into a surface unless you are certain it will contain the fastener. Take time to examine both the surface and the object being penetrated to assure your safety as well as the safety of others. The fastener can pass completely through the material and turn into a flying projectile.



Safe operation of powder-actuated tools demands knowledge and the operator's constant caution. There are too many recorded cases of innocent co-workers being severely injured when powder-actuated hand tool safety practices were disregarded. Before each use of a powder-actuated tool, a complete job hazard analysis of the task should be completed and only trained personnel allowed to operate the equipment.

**Don't get caught with your guard off...it could be disarming!!**