



# Weekly Safety Meeting

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## Safety With Air Tools

Air tools are powered by compressed air and include chippers, drills, hammers, sanders, spray guns, air ratchets, grinders, nibblers, needle scalers, and many more.

There are several dangers associated with the use of air tools. First and foremost is the danger of getting hit by one of the tool's attachments or by some kind of fastener that you are using with the tool.

All air tools on the worksite must be maintained in good condition, whether the tools are provided by the employer or the employees. If the tool comes with a chip guard or other safety mechanism, it must be installed according to the manufacturer's specifications and installed whenever the tool is used. Employees should never lift or hold a tool by its hose.

Air tools must be checked to see that the tools are fastened securely to the air hose to prevent them from becoming disconnected. A short wire or positive locking device attaching the air hose to the tool may also be used and will serve as an added safeguard.

### Handling Air Tools Safely:

- Employers should permit only trained workers to operate pneumatic tools.
- Employers should ensure tools are inspected before connecting them to the air supply. (Check for safety mechanisms and missing or loose screws, parts, and cylinder caps.)
- Employers should ensure air supply and pressure is correct for available tools.
- Before using, employers should train employees on proper tool operation and use, including air supply hose connection.
- Employees should always use the tool as if it is loaded with fasteners (nails, staples, etc.).
- Employers should insure work areas limit contact with other personnel not using these tools.
- Employers should ensure mechanical linkage between the work-contacting element and trigger is enclosed before operation of tool.
- Employees should always wear proper personal protective equipment while using this equipment (i.e., safety glasses or goggles, face shield, including safety glasses or goggles, and where necessary, safety shoes or boots, and hearing protection).
- Employers should post warning signs to warn personnel where pneumatic tools are in use. Include screens or shields in areas where nearby worker may be exposed to flying fragments, chips, dust, and excessive noise.

- Employers should ensure compressed air supply to tools is clean and dry, including the elimination of dust, moisture, and corrosive fumes that can damage pneumatic tools. Use in-line regulator filters and lubricator to increase tool life per manufacturer's instructions.
- Employers should ensure only manufacturer recommended attachments are in use.
- Employers should train employees how to prevent hand, feet, and body injury should tool/machine slip or break, and how to reduce physical fatigue by supporting heavy tools with a counterbalance, wherever possible.

### Special Notation About Air Pressure:

Air-powered tools power (that is, air) may be delivered at varying pressures and flows. If the pressure/flow exceeds the manufacturer's rating, the tool itself could over-speed, delivering too much torque or other excessive force. This is hazardous because of the increased possibility of tool or workpiece breakage.

Inadequate pressure or flow could result in an underperforming tool. This may prompt a worker to apply excessive force in the work, possibly causing tool breakage and injury. To correct this, an adjustment of air pressure to the manufacturer's rating is necessary. Make sure hoses are of the correct inside diameter and are not kinked or crushed. The compressor and receiver must have enough capacity to deliver air in an amount sufficient to properly operate all attached tools.

A severed air hose can also be dangerous. The air hose will whip around violently until the air is shut off causing injury to personnel nearby from the whipping hose. To prevent this condition, protect the hose from physical damage. Remember to use quick disconnect-type fittings and install the male end on the tool for ease of disconnect from air supply.

***TIME INVESTED IN SAFETY REDUCES WORK-RELATED INJURY AND ILLNESS!!***

