

Spot The Safety Violation: Nail Guns Are as Dangerous as Handguns



Is this worker in a good position to safely use a nail gun?



Nail guns are very useful tools in construction and can make work go much faster. But they're also very dangerous—as dangerous, in fact, as a handgun. So it's especially important that workers follow safe work procedures when using this equipment.

For example, the worker in this picture from [elcosh](#) is in a very awkward position. He's balanced on his toes holding the nail gun well above his head, making it difficult to firmly press the nose against the wood beam as he should. It also looks like his free hand is a little too close to the nail gun. Should the worker stumble or lose his balance, he could easily shoot himself in the hand—or worse.

Example: A construction worker in his 20s fell while carrying a nail gun. It shot a 3' nail into his head, killing him.

10 Tips for Safe Use of Nail Guns

- Don't secure the trigger in the ON position.
- Carry the tool by the handle only and never walk around with your finger on the trigger.

- Never rest the gun against any part of your body or try to climb a ladder with the gun cradled against your body.
- Never point a nail gun at others. Exercise extreme caution when using any air tool around other people. Watch for co-workers behind or underneath the nailing surface.
- Position yourself'especially your free hand'out of the line of fire.
- Make sure you're in a stable position before firing a nail gun. Don't overreach when using the gun.
- Use a nail gun with a sequential trigger mechanism, when appropriate.
- Don't fire a nail gun unless the nose is firmly pressed against the item or surface to be nailed.
- Avoid nailing into knots and metal, which can cause the nails to ricochet.
- Disconnect the gun when leaving it unattended, performing maintenance, moving to another work area or clearing jams.

The [**OHS Insider**](#) can help you develop a [**power tool program**](#) for nail guns and other power tools that complies with the OHS laws. The site also has related tools and resources such as:

- A [**comic book-style guide on nail gun safety**](#) from NIOSH
- A [**video**](#) on safe handling of nail guns
- A [**hand and power tool safety checklist**](#)
- A handout for workers on [**using compressed air tools safely**](#).