

Spot The Safety Violation: That Looks Like It Hurts



How do you think this worker ended up with a nail in his hand'

Power tools, such as nail guns, can help workers get their jobs done more quickly. After all, using a nail gun is much

faster than pounding in nails individually using a hammer. But nail guns can endanger workers if they aren't used properly.

For example, this picture from [WorkSafe Victoria](#) in Australia shows what can happen when a nail gun is used improperly. In this case, the worker disabled the nail gun's safety mechanism to speed up the process of nailing palings. Of course, the resulting trip to the emergency room slowed down the job considerably.

10 Nail Gun Safety Tips

To ensure that your workers don't get injured or injure someone else when using nail guns, have them follow these tips:

1. Don't secure the trigger in the ON position.
2. Carry the tool by the handle only and never walk around with your finger on the trigger.
3. Never rest the gun against any part of your body or try to climb a ladder with the gun cradled against your body.
4. 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.
5. Position yourself especially your free hand out of the line of fire.
6. Make sure you're in a stable position before firing a nail gun. Don't overreach when using the gun.
7. Use a nail gun with a sequential trigger mechanism, when appropriate.
8. Don't fire a nail gun unless the nose is firmly pressed against the item or surface to be nailed.
9. Avoid nailing into knots and metal, which can cause the nails to ricochet.
10. Disconnect the gun when leaving it unattended, performing maintenance, moving to another work area or

clearing jams.

You should also remind workers that they should *never* disable the safety devices on machinery or tools, such as [removing guards from equipment](#). If this worker hadn't disabled the nail gun's safety mechanism, he might not have shot himself with a nail.

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 has additional related tools and resources such as:

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