

TT042 – Safe Use of Nail Guns

A nail gun is effectively a firearm which can release steel projectiles more than 130mm in length. The safety of nail gun operations is mainly dependent upon the skill, knowledge and ‘safe work’ attitude of the user.



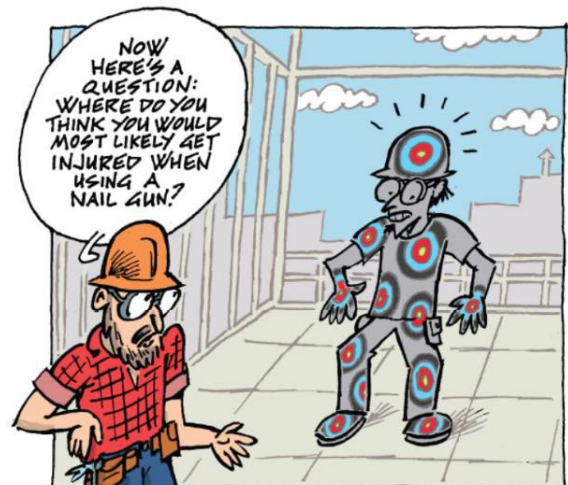
- A nail gun is like a real “GUN”
- NEVER assume the nail gun is empty
- NEVER point the nail gun at yourself or anyone else
- NEVER engage in “horseplay”
- Nail guns can cause serious injury
- ONLY operate the gun when the contact is placed firmly against the timber frame.

Nail Gun Use

- Hold and carry the nail gun with your finger off the trigger.
- Keep your free hand, not holding the gun, as far from the nailing location as possible (30cm or more is best).
- Maintain good body position and keep your limbs and body out of the field of fire of a stray nail.
- Keep co-workers out of your line of fire.
- Disconnect the hose before you clear a nail jam.
- Know where the studs or joists are when nailing cladding or sheathing.
- Use extra care when toe nailing, nailing in tight spaces, or with the gun above your head.
- Allow space for the nail gun to recoil (kickback) and don't to try to stop or fight this recoil.
- Use your dominant hand to operate the gun.
- Work only as fast as you can safely control the gun.
- Resist pressure to work faster.

Nail Gun Trigger Safety

- Ask your employer for nail gun safety training if you are a new user. Ask how the different trigger settings and safety devices work.
- Know what type of trigger you are using before you start working.
- Never remove the safety tip spring or disable a safety device as this increases the risk of injury.
- Use the ‘single shot’ trigger (also called the sequential trigger) when possible. This setting shoots one nail at a time once contact is initially made to the work face and then the trigger is pulled. It will not drive a second nail on recoil.



TT042 – Safe Use of Nail Guns

Specific PPE for Nail Guns

- **Steel Cap Boots:** Helps protect workers' toes from nail gun injuries.
- **Safety Eyewear:** Safety glasses or goggles to ASNZS 1337 standard. A high impact resistant face shield may also be considered.
- **Hearing protection:** Protect your hearing from the loud noise (up to 138dB(A)) created by the driving of the nail, by wearing either ear plugs or earmuffs.

If using Compressors and Hoses:

- Check your nail gun, air hose, hose fittings, and compressor to make sure they work properly.
- Use only tools and equipment that work properly.
- Make sure your air pressure is in the range recommended by the manufacturer.
- Nail guns should be lubricated on a regular basis.
- Don't lift, lower or carry your nail gun by the air hose.
- Disconnect the air hose when clearing a nail jam or doing any maintenance on the nail gun.

Discussion Points and Q&A

Q. What are the most common causes of nail gun injuries?

A. Unintended nail discharge; a nail passing through the work piece; a nail ricochet off a hard surface; missing the work piece all together; nailing in an awkward position.

Q. Which trigger setting is the safest to use?

A. The single shot / sequential trigger is the safest as it prevents double firing.

Q. What specific personal protective equipment must be worn when using a nail gun?

A. Safety glasses / face shield; hearing protection; safety boots.

Q. What are the best ways to avoid nail gun penetration injuries?

A. Carry the nail gun with your finger off the trigger; keep your limbs and body out of the field of fire.

Musculoskeletal Disorders

Framing nail guns can weigh up to 3-4kgs and many framing jobs require workers to hold and use these guns for long periods of time in awkward hand/arm postures.

Holding a 3-4kg weight for long periods of time can lead to musculoskeletal symptoms such as soreness or tenderness in the fingers, wrist, or forearm tendons and muscles.

These symptoms can progress to pain, or in the most severe cases, inability to work.

If use of a nail gun is causing musculoskeletal pain or symptoms of musculoskeletal disorders, medical care should be sought.

Conclusion

Nail gun injuries are painful. Some cause severe injuries or death. Nail gun injuries are on the rise along with the increased popularity of these powerful tools.

These injuries can be prevented if more workers take steps to improve their nail gun safety.

As well as the risk of injury from a penetration of the nail to the body, also consider other hazards such as the loud 'impulse' noise from driving the nail, as well as the use of compressors and air hoses.

Take a look at your practices and discuss how to improve nail gun safety on your work site. Working together we can reduce nail gun injuries.

And remember, work only as fast as you can safely control the gun. Resist pressure to work faster.

TT042 – Safe Use of Nail Guns

I have read / heard and understand the information in this Toolbox Talk, I will ask my manager or a Fletcher Living Site Manager if I have any questions.

Name	Company	Date	Signature