



Toolbox Talks

Nail Guns



Nail guns, also called nailers, are useful power tools that boost productivity on the job but also cause tens of thousands of painful injuries each year.

➤ The majority of nail gun injuries are to the hands and fingers, but severe nail gun injuries can result in paralysis, blindness, brain damage, bone fractures, and death.

➤ **Only workers who have been trained on safe operating procedures should be using nail guns.**

Major risk factors that can lead to a nail gun injury include:

1. Unintended nail discharge from double fire or from knocking the safety contact with the trigger squeezed.
2. Nail penetration through a lumber work piece, which can happen when a nail is placed near a knot in the wood.
3. Nail ricochet after striking a hard surface or metal feature. Wood knots and metal framing hardware are common causes of ricochets.
4. Missing the work piece which can happen when the tip of the nail gun does not make full contact with the work piece and the discharged nail becomes airborne.
5. Nailing in awkward positions where the tool and its recoil are more difficult to control.
6. Bypassing or disabling safety features of a nail gun.

It's important to understand how the exact nail gun you are using works based on the kind of trigger system it has, because not all nailers work the same.

A full sequential trigger is the safest type and will only fire a nail when the controls are activated in a certain order by pushing the safety contact first and then squeezing the trigger. *Both the safety contact tip and the trigger must be released and activated again to fire a second nail.*

- Never bypass or disable nail gun safety features.
- Check tools and power sources before operating to make sure that they are in proper working order. Take broken or malfunctioning nail guns out of service immediately.
- Set up operations so that workers are not in the line of fire from nail guns being operated.
- Check lumber surfaces before nailing. Look for knots, nails, straps, hangers, etc. that could cause recoil or ricochet.
- For placement work, always keep hands at least 12 inches away from the nailing point. Consider using clamps to brace instead of your hands.

