TAKE CARE WITH COMPRESSED AIR

S.C. SWIDERSKI LLC
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Take Care with Compressed Air Toolbox Talks

Compressed air tools are commonly used in many workspaces. Many workers take them for granted, ignoring the hazards involved in their use. Compressed air is not "just air." It is a focused stream of air driven at a high velocity, which can cause injury or death to its operator or person in the immediate area.

Fooling around with compressed air can be lethal. In one case, a blast of air playfully directed behind a worker startled him and caused him to fall against a moving piece of machinery. A misdirected blast of compressed air can "pop" an eyeball from its socket, rupture an eardrum, or cause a brain hemorrhage. Directed at the mouth, it can rupture the lungs and intestines. If used to blow dust or dirt off clothing or body parts, it can cause bubbles of air to enter the bloodstream, even though a layer of clothing, and inflate and rupture body organs.

To prevent accidental injury when working with compressed air, here are several precautions to follow:

- A compressed-air tool operator must wear eye protection and other appropriate personal protective equipment.
- Before operating an air hose, examine all connection to make sure that they are tight and will not come loose under pressure. A loose air hose can make a dangerous bullwhip.
- Check the air hose carefully to make sure it is in good condition before opening the valve to let air into the hose; when the job is finished, turn off the valves on both the tool and the air line.
- Hold the nozzle when turning the air on or off.
- Before turning on the air pressure, make sure that dirt from machinery will not be blown onto other workers.
- Do not kink the hose to stop the airflow; always turn off the air and the control valve.
- Continuously check the condition of a compressed air tool and the air hose for damage or signs of failure.
- Never point a compressed air hose nozzle at any part of your body or another person.
- Never use compressed air for a practical joke.
- Never look into the 'business end" of a compressed air tool.
- Never use compressed air for cleaning work clothes or machinery.
- Keep air hoses out of aisle ways where they can be damaged by traffic or be a tripping hazard.

Compressed air tools are safe and reliable when properly used.

When is the last time that you inspected your air powered tools and hoses?

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