

TOOLBOX TALK: NAIL GUN SAFETY

Job or site _____

Date _____

Led by _____

Open with this

Pick up your gun and look at the trigger. Sequential or contact trip? That answer changes your odds of ending up in the emergency room this year, and we are going to talk about why.

The talk

There are two firing modes. Sequential means the safety tip has to be pressed first, then the trigger, one nail per pull. Contact trip, what everybody calls bump firing, means the trigger can be held down and the gun fires every time the tip touches something.

Bump firing is faster on a deck or a sheathing wall and it is where most of the injuries come from. Research on residential framers has consistently found roughly double the injury rate with contact trip triggers compared with sequential. That is the number that should decide this for us.

The classic injury is the double fire. The recoil bounces the tip off the work and back onto it while the trigger is still down, and a second nail goes somewhere you did not intend, often into a hand holding the piece. It happens faster than you can react.

The second classic is nailing toward your own hand. Toe nailing, hanging a hanger, holding a block, nailing near the edge of a stud where the nail deflects off a knot and comes out the side. Keep your non nailing hand at least a hand span away from the point of impact, and use a clamp or a block if you cannot.

Then there is the one nobody counts: the gun left on the deck with air connected, the gun carried up a ladder with a finger on the trigger, the gun set down on a platform where it can fall. Disconnect the air before you clear a jam, before you carry it up anything, before you leave it.

And never point it at anybody, even in a joke, even disconnected. The number of nail gun injuries that begin with horseplay is not small and it is exactly the kind of injury nobody has a good explanation for afterward.

Point at these before anybody starts

- Which trigger each gun on this site has, sequential or contact trip
- Where the non nailing hand sits on a toe nail or a hanger
- The air hose, its connections and whether anything is leaking

- Where guns are being set down, and whether the air is connected
- The safety tip on each gun, checking it is present and moves freely
- Eye protection on every person within range of a ricochet

The rules that apply

- Use sequential trigger guns wherever the work allows it, especially for toe nailing, hangers, blocking and any work near a hand.
- Keep the non nailing hand at least a hand span from the firing point, or use a clamp instead of a hand.
- Disconnect the air before clearing a jam, changing a tip, adjusting depth, carrying the gun up a ladder or setting it down for a break.
- Never disable the safety contact tip and never hold the trigger while walking or climbing.
- Eye protection meeting ANSI Z87.1 for the operator and anybody within range of a ricocheting nail.
- Report every nail gun injury, including one that went through and came out, because an untreated puncture gets infected.

Ask the crew

- Who here has been hit or nearly hit by a nail this year, and what was the gun doing?
- Where on this job today is somebody going to be nailing near their own hand?
- Which of our guns could be switched to a sequential trigger this week?

Close with this

Sequential where you can, hand clear, air off before you touch the tip. A nail through a hand is a month, not an afternoon.

Attendance

Everybody who was present signs, including subcontractors and anybody visiting the site.

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This talk is general safety information for a crew briefing, not legal advice and not a substitute for the training your employees are required to have. Standards are quoted for orientation only. Check the current text of the standard and your own state plan, which may be stricter than the federal rule.