

Pneumatic Nailers and Staplers

The second proposed safety order revision is in response to a petition meant to address the use of the term "unattended" in Construction Safety Orders §1740(b). Petitioner Jim Muskovich contended that the term can be misinterpreted to mean that it is a violation for a worker to set down a pneumatic gun for even a few moments.

Nail guns and staplers have seen a number of injury incidents in recent years, attributable to human error, haste, lack of training and lack of adherence to safe work practices.

Among the provisions of the proposal:

New §1740(b)(2) prescribes that pneumatically driven nailers and staplers be operated and maintained according to manufacturers' instructions.

New subsection (b)(3) would require that personal protective equipment be used according to CSO §1514.

New subsection (b)(4) would prohibit operating controls from being removed, tampered with, altered or otherwise disabled. This requirement would prohibit disabling of safety devices to increase production, such as removing the trigger.

New subsection (b)(5) would require that nailers and staplers be connected to the air supply with a safety device to prevent them from being accidentally disconnected. This addresses hazards created if an operator is thrown off balance, the hose whips or the tool slides out of control off a roof, the Standards Board says. Another new subsection prescribes that tools be equipped with a fitting that discharges all compressed air in the tool if it is disconnected.

New subsection (f) would require that an employer's Code of Safe Practices include training provisions specifically for use of pneumatically driven nailers and staplers where applicable.

A final new subsection would prescribe training requirements on nailers and staplers.

Subsection (c) describes conditions under which a tool must be disconnected from its air supply. They include:

- Performing maintenance or repair on the tool
- Clearing a jam
- When the operator leaves the working level where the tool is

- Whenever the worker is more than 25 feet from the tool or it is out of his or her sight

"The effect of these amendments would be to eliminate the ambiguity that was the subject of the petition and to clarify specific tasks requiring complete de-energization of the tool," the Standards Board says.

Left out of the proposal was controversial language that would have required tools to be disconnected when they are left unattended for substantial periods of time, such as during breaks or between shifts. Industry points out that data indicate no worker injuries have been attributed to incidents involving unattended nailers.

Construction representatives insist that carpenters should be allowed to set down their connected tools to retrieve lumber or work product.