



North Carolina Wing Weekly Safety Blast



2018 - Topic #22 – Compressed Air Safety

Reason for this Blast:

Compressed air is often misjudged and not recognized as a hazard because people often think of air as harmless.

Safety Points:

- **Compressed Air can cause the following serious injuries:**
 - Air forced into body tissues through the skin can cause an air embolism (air bubbles in the blood stream) which can be fatal.
 - Inflation injuries of the intestine can be caused by air being directed at private body areas. Air blown into the mouth at only 5 PSI can rupture the esophagus or the lungs.
 - Eye and ear injuries can occur from a blast of air or flying particles. These types of eye and ear injuries can cause partial or total loss of sight or hearing.
 - An ear drum can blow out at 40 PSI from 4 inches away and possibly cause brain damage. As little as 12 PSI can blow an eye out of its socket!
 - Flying particles can cause cuts and bruises to any part of the body.
- **Ways to prevent these injuries:**
 - Hoses and lines should be rated to meet the maximum operating pressure of the equipment. If you must clean with compressed air, you must use an air nozzle with a specially designed safety tip with relief ports that reduce the pressure at the nozzle to less than 30 psi in case blockage was to occur.
 - Always wear proper Personal Protective Equipment: safety glasses with side shields and a face shield if needed, hearing protection.
 - You must also have effective chip guarding when blowing off debris in tight quarters.
 - Never use compressed air to clean clothing or hair!
 - Never point compressed air at yourself or another person!



MAIN DISCUSSION POINT OF THIS SAFETY BLAST

Compressed air is a useful tool, when used properly. Be aware of the hazards, and report or repair inconsistencies, if necessary.