Everyday Safety

*Tailgate Talks*

**Compressed Air Safety**

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

* Air forced into body tissues through skin can cause an air embolism (air bubbles in the bloodstream) which can be fatal if it reaches the heart, lungs, or brain.
* Inflation injuries of the intestine can be caused by air being directed at private body areas. A worker in the U.K. died of injuries sustained through horseplay with a compressed air hose. The act of horseplay can be deadly!
* 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 and hearing.

* The sound from a compressed air hose can reach 120-130 dB which is well above OSHA’s 90dB permissible exposure limit.
* 40 PSI can blow out an ear drum 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.

**Remember:**

* Hoses and lines should be rated to meet the maximum operating pressure of the equipment.
* Always wear proper Personal Protective Equipment:
  + Safety glasses with side shields and a face shield if needed
  + Hearing protection
  + Respiratory protection, depending on the material(s) being worked with



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* Normal work clothing is not protection against compressed air.
* If you must clean with compressed air, do not use air that is set above 30 PSI. You must

also have effective chip guarding and proper PPE (OSHA standard 1910.242(b)).

* NEVER USE COMPRESSED AIR TO CLEAN CLOTHING OR HAIR!
* NEVER POINT COMPRESSED AIR AT YOURSELF OR ANOTHER PERSON!

## Action Item:

Go through the manufacturer’s safety recommendations in the air compressor’s safety manual and read and understand the maintenance requirements for the compressor.

## Related Topics:

***Resources and References:***

VOSHA/OSHA Standards 29CFR1910.135 and 1926.100 for more information Standards are available at [*http://www.osha.gov/laws-regs.html*](http://www.osha.gov/laws-regs.html)

# Date: / /

**“Compressed Air Safety” Sign In Sheet:**

**Name: Signature:**