WESTERN School Division
Morden, Manitoba
"Rooted In Caring; Committed to Learning"

Safe Work Procedure: Using Air Tools and Compressed Air

Department/Area:	Approved by:	Date Created:	Review/Revision Date:
Maintenance/Custodial	Workplace Safety and Health Committee	Nov.15, 2023	Annually

Potential Hazard	Risk level
Awkward/sustained postures	Medium
Forceful exertions - stabilizing tool	Medium
Repetitive movements	Low
Vibration - (hand arm) increases with time	Low
Chemicals - dust	Low
Flailing air hose if it breaks loos	Low
Other - flying particles	Low

Risk control devices, personal protective equipment, and other safety considerations	Training/Reference info
• Safety footwear • Eye protection or face shield if there is risk for flying particles • Hearing protection • Secure loose clothing, hair, drawstrings from hoods, jewelry, etc. that could become entangled in the tool	• Injury prevention orientation • On-the-Job training • Operating manuals

Note: Common signs and symptoms of a musculoskeletal injury (MSI) can include pain, burning, swelling, stiffness, numbness/tingling, and/or loss of movement or strength in a body part. Report these to your supervisor.

The direct supervisor must ensure that employees who report to him/her are trained and follow this safe work procedure.

Steps to complete this task safely:

- Before connecting the air tool, ensure the air hose does not have soft spots, bubbles or loose connections. Check that the female snap ring connection is working properly, and that the hose is not strung against hot or sharp objects.
- Only use air tools in the manner specified by its instruction manual.
- Pre-inspect the tool for cracks, and defective operating or safety switches. Do not use a damaged tool. Remove damaged tools from service and inform your supervisor.
- If possible, connect the tool to an air supply with an on-line filter/lubricator on it. Otherwise, lubricate the air tool by putting a few drops of air tool lubricant into the air inlet of the tool at least once a shift.

- Ensure the air pressure of the line does not exceed the manufacturer's recommendation for the air tool, and that the attachments are rated at or higher than the tool. If you're unsure, ask your supervisor.
- For repetitive or long-lasting tasks, take micro-breaks or change tasks or positions to reduce stress on the same muscles.
- Try to work in neutral positions as often as possible (wrists and back straight, elbows in). Reduce how much you twist your back by taking small steps to reposition yourself, and try to avoid overreaching.
- Use both hands to use the air tool if it has been designed that way or if this helps stabilize against sudden jerky movements.
- Try to use air tools where there is adequate ventilation to remove dust. If this is not possible, use a dust mask.
- Always keep your second hand (for one-handed tools) and other body parts clear of rotating parts, or the cutting or drilling path of the tool.
- Never use full-pressure compressed air on yourself, another worker, or your work area, or use it to clean your personal protective equipment (PPE). Shop air must be stepped down to 30 PSI with a silvent tip to clean PPE.
- Keep work areas free of loose tools to prevent tripping. After use, disconnect and return the tools to their designated areas. Disconnect and roll up the air hose and return it to its designated area.