

SAFE WORK PRACTICE – COMPRESSED AIR USE

PURPOSE

To provide grasp of the hazards associated with the use of compressed air and to ensure that the work being performed is done in a manner that minimizes the risk of worker injury or damage to equipment and environment

PREREQUISITES

- Only authorized personnel - adequately qualified, trained and with sufficient experience - shall be permitted to work with compressed air. Users should not become complacent when handling compressed air.
- Maintain and use equipment according to the manufacturer’s specifications and legislated safety requirements.

POTENTIAL HAZARD	PRECAUTION
Air embolisms arising when air is forced through the skin	Compressed air must never be used to blow debris or dirt off any worker. When in use, do not point compressed air toward self or any other workers.
Physical injury to the ear drums from sudden intense air pressure or personal injury or damage to property from flying particles	Use of appropriate personal protective Equipment (e.g., eye protection, hearing protection, face shields, etc.) is mandatory. Keep work areas clean through regular housekeeping activities to minimise airborne dust levels.
Strike with uncontrolled hose or coupling	All couplings must have safety clips fitted to them to prevent inadvertent uncoupling when under pressure. Never use makeshift tie-wire.

- Ensure spill containments are in place.
- Review hazards in work area and complete a Site-Specific Risk Assessment (2C SSRA).
- Perform a pre-operation inspection of all equipment and tools prior to use.
- Turn off the air pressure and relieve the line pressure before disconnecting the hose or changing tools.
- Ensure valves or the hose connection is off before applying air into the hose.
- All hose connectors must be a “quick disconnect”/pressure release type and have a safety chain or cable (whip check).
- Post warning signs and use barricades, or restrict access, to ensure other workers in the area are aware of the potential hazard.
- Check hoses regularly for cuts, bulges or other damage. Repair or replace defective hoses.
- Under no circumstances shall the pressure of the compressed air exceed the maximum working pressure of any of the components in use.
- A proper pressure regulator and relief device must be part of the system to ensure the correct desired pressure is maintained.
- Use the correct air supply hose for the tool/equipment in use.
- Ensure placement of wheel chocks to prevent unexpected movement of mobile compressor.
- Place hoses overhead, or clear from traffic area to prevent hose damage.
- For gas generator air compressors, ensure the unit is equipped with the appropriate fire extinguisher.
- Do not use compressed air to clean dust or snow removal.