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## **TAKE-5 – Compressed Air Hazards**

### *Five Minute Safety Talks*

Compressed air is a concentrated stream of air at high pressure and high speed that can cause serious injury. Compressed air can enter the blood stream through a break in the skin or body opening. An air bubble in the blood stream is known medically as an embolism. An embolism, can obstruct or block a blood vessel or artery resulting in coma, paralysis and death depending on its size, duration and location. In addition, compressed air used for cleaning can throw filings, chips, shavings and solid particles. The pressure necessary to remove particles from equipment and surfaces is strong enough to blow them into eyes, ears, or skin.

Due to the serious injuries resulting from compressed air, the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA), requires that compressed air not be used for cleaning purposes except where reduced to less than 30 psi and with effective chip guarding and personal protective equipment. The phrase, “reduce less than 30 psi” means that the nozzle pressure or opening of a gun, pipe, or cleaning lance used for cleaning purposes will remain at a pressure level below 30 psi in the event that the tool is dead-ended. This can be achieved by using equipment with relief ports that discharge air to reduce the air pressure at the nozzle to less than 30 psi. The term dead-ended refers to blocking of the tip of the air gun, pipe, lance, etc.

Effective chip guarding means any method or equipment that prevents a chip or particle from being blown into the eyes or unbroken skin of the operator or other workers. Effective chip guarding may be separate from the air nozzles, for example the use of screens or barriers. The use of protective cone air nozzles is generally acceptable protection for the operator.



It should be noted that employees should never used compressed air to clean themselves or their clothing.

#### Sources:

Dangers of Compressed Air. Retrieved from [www.aircontrolindustries.com](http://www.aircontrolindustries.com)

Air Gun Safety. Retrieved from [www.grainger.com](http://www.grainger.com)

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*For more information on our Ag Industry specific training,  
contact us at 844-8SAFETY or [www.safetymadesimple.com](http://www.safetymadesimple.com)*

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*Acknowledgement:*

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*Group Discussion Notes/Comments:*

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