

COMPRESSED AIR IN THE WORKPLACE

Compressed air is a strong stream of air that comes out at high pressure and speed. It can be very dangerous for the person using it and for others nearby. One major risk is that compressed air can enter the bloodstream through cuts or openings in the body, creating an air bubble called an embolism. This can block blood flow and lead to serious problems like coma, paralysis, or even death.

Horseplay has been a cause of some serious workplace accidents caused by individuals not aware of the hazards of compressed air, or proper work procedures.

KNOW THE DANGERS OF COMPRESSED AIR:

- HANDLE WITH CAUTION
- HAZARDS



BC Forest Safety

Safety is **good** business

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HANDLE COMPRESSED AIR WITH CAUTION

Air embolisms are usually linked to scuba diving mistakes, they can also happen when using compressed air in the workplace because of the high pressure. Even a small amount of air in the bloodstream can be life-threatening, so it's important to handle compressed air carefully.

Examples of these Hazards of Compressed Air:

- Compressed air accidentally blown into the mouth can rupture the lungs, stomach or intestines
- Compressed air can enter the navel, even through a layer of clothing, and inflate and rupture the intestines
- Compressed air can enter the bloodstream, and death is possible if it makes its way to blood vessels in the brain
- Direct contact with compressed air can lead to serious medical conditions and even death
- Safety nozzles which regulate compressed air to low pressures must be used when cleaning clothing. (OHSR 4.42 (4) (a), < 10 psi)
- As little as 12 pounds of compressed air pressure can blow an eye out of its socket. If an air pocket reaches the heart, it causes symptoms similar to a heart attack. Upon reaching the brain, pockets of air may lead to a stroke.
- Compressed air can propel small debris at high speeds, leading to serious eye injuries.

REMEMBER:

Always use appropriate safety gear and follow protocols when working with compressed air. AVOID cleaning your clothes, hair or body with COMPRESSED AIR!

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