

Sales Personnel Don't Know Nail Gun Risks or Safe Practices

Buyer Beware: Personnel Selling Nail Guns Know Little About Dangerous Tools

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Overview

Nail guns used in framing construction cause 35,000 injuries requiring emergency room visits each year. Nail guns with a sequential trigger (which requires depressing the nose of the gun first and then squeezing the trigger) are half as likely to cause injury as those with the contact trip or "bump gun" (which allows discharge when the nose and the trigger mechanism are both depressed). A 2003 voluntary ANSI standard called for shipping newly manufactured tools with the sequential mechanism in place, but the contact trip is often included. New models allow users to toggle between sequential and contact trip triggers. A knowledgeable sales force is potentially very important to educating users. This study sent researchers posing as customers to request information about nail guns from sales personnel in a variety of stores selling or renting framing nail guns to construction contractors as well as to consumers in five different states.

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See abstract:

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Key Findings

- Fewer than half of the sales personnel (41%) provided any safety information, less than one-quarter (24%) provided information on trigger differences, and less than one-third (29%) were able to correctly describe trigger differences when asked.
- Nearly three-quarters (74%) of sales personnel provided some misinformation about the tools: "No way you can hurt yourself with these. They don't fire like a gun."
- Women purchasers were less likely than men to be provided with information about trigger mechanisms: "Princess, if I tell you, what are the chances you are going to know what it means?"
- Information was not readily available to sales personnel and was not contained in the packaging.
- Nail guns were routinely described as "safe" and "easy to operate," even by sales personnel describing injuries associated with their use: "Even if you shoot yourself, you really won't get hurt."
- Recommendation: Joint action by OSHA and CPSC to "assure the use of tools with sequential triggers and education of users and sales personnel..."
- Recommendation: Sales and rental venues have the potential to provide contractors and consumers with information about safer equipment.



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