

MATERIAL HANDLING

Safe Working Practices:

SWP- 15 Working with Compressed Air Tools

Before doing any type of work you must carry out an assessment of the task to be undertaken. This will include the equipment to be worked on, the task itself, Personal Protective Equipment requirements, the work area and environment, plus the tools and equipment required to carry out the job safely. Consult your team leader if you are not satisfied the job can be carried out in a safe manner.

GENERAL SAFETY

- 1.0 Always read and implement the manufacturer's instructions on use and maintenance of air tools.
- 1.1 In certain roles such as welders and painters who are deemed as high usage users are subject to Health Assessments and are to record all usage data for Hand Arm Vibration Syndrome (HAVS) purposes. Equipment used by these team members are subject to regular test for vibration with tests results recorded and used to formulate usage under HAVS control
- 1.2 In addition to the instructions provided by the manufacturer the following guide lines should be followed:
 - a) Use the air tool only for its intended purpose.
 - b) Make sure the space needed for use and maintenance of the tool is adequate.
 - c) Always wear appropriate eye protection and a breathing mask (if dust is created during use) see SWP-32 "Personal Protective Equipment".
 - d) Keep proper footing and balance at all times. If necessary secure work with clamps or vice.
 - e) Keep tools away from the body and at a safe distance from other people in the work area.
 - f) Do not direct air from the hose or the tool at yourself or others. Compressed air can kill!
 - g) Do not wear loose or ill fitting clothing. Remove watches, rings and other jewellery before operating.
 - h) Keep flammable material away from tools when operating. All flammable waste, such as wiping or cleaning rags, should be placed in a closed metal container and disposed of properly.
 - i) Do not carry the air tool by the hose or attempt to pull it by force from the air supply rather than disconnect it properly.
 - j) Disconnect the air supply before carrying out any repair or service work on the tool, changing accessories and when not in use.

MAINTENANCE AND LUBRICATION

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Authorisation: HR & QHSE Director

Approval: Quality, Safety and Environmental Manager

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- 2.0 Maintain air tools with care. Keep oiled for optimum performance. Follow manufacturer's instructions for lubricating and changing accessories.
- 2.1 Lubricate air tools daily, use only oils recommended by the manufacturer.
- 2.2 Make sure RPM (revolutions per minute) ratings of accessories equal or exceed the RPM rating of the tool.
- 2.3 Store the tool in a safe, secure environment.

OPERATING INSTRUCTIONS

- 3.0 Always have the tool in the "off" mode when connecting to the air supply.
- 3.1 Do not exceed the recommended operating air pressure.
- 3.2 Use proper hoses and fittings. Never use quick change couplings attached directly to the tool. They add weight, cause failure due to vibration and can be dangerous in use. Instead add a leader hose to the tool and use the quick connector coupling between that and the air supply (generally a permanently coiled "hose whip").
- 3.3 Keep hoses away from heat, oil and sharp edges. Check hoses for wear before each use. Make certain that all connections are secure.
- 3.4 Never force the tool, allow it to work at its own pace.
- 3.5 When appropriate, accessory retainers should be used to prevent discharge or ejection of the accessory which may cause injury.
- 3.6 Air operated chisels and hammers etc. should not be started until the tool is held against the work.
- 3.7 All accessories should be removed from the tool when not in use.

CHILDREN AND YOUNG PERSONS

- 4.0 See Safety & Environmental Manual procedure "Employment of Young Persons" for precise definitions on children and young persons.
- 4.1 "Children" will not be allowed to work with compressed air tools. They may be allowed to observe such operations and work practices, but must take no active part, be kept at a safe distance and under the constant supervision of a competent person.
- 4.2 "Young Persons" may be allowed to work with compressed air tools subject to the conditions imposed above and only when training under the constant supervision of a competent person.