

Powered Hand Tools – Powder-Actuated Tools Fact Sheet



WHAT GENERAL SAFETY PRINCIPLES SHOULD YOU FOLLOW WHEN USING POWDER-ACTUATED TOOLS?

- Allow only trained, competent and authorized persons who are familiar with the regulations governing the use of the tool to operate powder-actuated tools (also known as explosive actuated fastening tools).
- Powder-actuated tools operate like loaded guns. Handle powder-actuated tools with the same respect and safety precautions as guns.
- Use the manufacturer's information as a guide for safe operation and maintenance of the tool.
- Wear safety glasses or goggles, or a face shield (with safety glasses or goggles) and a hard hat.
- Wear hearing protection.
- Brace yourself at all times when working on ladders or scaffolds to maintain good balance.
- Keep tools pointed in a safe direction. Never point powder-actuated tools at anyone.
- Load powder-actuated tools just before use. Do not carry loaded tools from job to job.
- Do not leave loaded powder-actuated tools unattended.
- Do not allow bystanders near the work. Shields for protecting workers against a possible ricochet may be necessary in the working area.

How should you care and service a powder-actuated tool?

- Clean and maintain tools according to the manufacturers' instructions.
- Check tools before use to ensure that they are in good working order.
- Tag defective tools "Out of service" and remove from service until properly repaired.
- Store tools and cartridges in a locked container when they are not in use. Ensure that the tool is unloaded before storing it.

How should you use a powder-actuated tool safely?

- Use the tool at right angles to the work surface.
- Check the chamber to see that the barrel is clean and free from any obstruction, before using the tool.
- Do not use the tool where flammable or explosive vapours, dust or similar substances are present.
- Do not place your hand over the front (muzzle) end of a loaded tool.

How should you use the projectiles (fasteners, nails, studs, etc.) safely?

- Use only the projectiles (fasteners, nails, studs, etc.) recommended by the tool manufacturer.
- Ensure that the base material has no holes or openings and is of sufficient consistency to prevent a projectile from passing right through.
- Do not load a tool until immediately before use.
- Do not force a projectile into a working surface that is harder than the projectile being used. If the base material is unknown, use a hand hammer to drive the projectile, using it as a centre punch.

How should you use charge cartridges safely?

- Use only cartridges recommended by the tool manufacturer.
- Check that the colour of the cartridge is appropriate for work being done. Charge cartridges are colour-coded to show their strength.
- Conduct a first trial by using the weakest or lowest strength charge cartridge.
- Provide adequate ventilation in confined spaces where powder-actuated tools are used.
- Hold the tool in the fixing position for no less than 5 to 15 seconds when a tool misfires. Keep the tool pointed in a direction that will not cause injury to you or others and unload a cartridge with extreme caution.
- Use caution when using tools near live electrical circuits. Make sure that the nails (etc.) do not enter live circuits buried or hidden in the base material.
- Keep cartridges in a lock up when not in use.
- Do not attempt to force a cartridge into a tool.
- Do not discard unfired cartridges carelessly.
- Do not carry cartridges loose or in a pocket. Carry them in the manufacturer's package.

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