ALERT

Health & Safety

AB-OHS-2020-011 | July 2021

Compressed Air Injection Injury

Background

An operative on one of our projects received a compressed air injury to the palm of his hand from a paint sprayer.

What happened?

The IP was involved in the assembly and spray painting of site permit booths. The nozzle of the sprayer blocked, and the IP started to clean/unblock the nozzle. It appears that while disassembling the nozzle, the IP inadvertently touched the trigger releasing some of the stored compressed paint which remained in the line. The IP received an injection injury to the palm of his hand. The size of the puncture wound was approximately 2mm with a small area of localized swelling.

(Photographs are sample / typical, not the IP in this case)

What's been found?

The operative was wearing gloves, but the paint and compressed air penetrated the glove before piercing the IP's skin and injecting paint into the IP's hand.

The operative turned off the compressor but did not fully de-pressurise the system (correct procedure) before he started cleaning/ unblocking the equipment.

The spray-painting tool works at a deceivingly high pressure as it leaves the nozzle in the form of a narrow jet before dispersing or misting out.

Recommendations & Actions

- Manufacturer's Instructions – to be present and reviewed before using any new tool or piece of equipment.
- Operators of high-pressure guns and their supervisors to be informed about the seriousness of such injuries.

Things to Consider

Line of Fire awareness training.

Lessons Learnt

High-pressure injection injuries need immediate medical treatment.

Research has shown that patients usually have minimal complaints following the event. Mostly there is only a small puncture wound to the skin. After some hours swelling, pain and sensibility impairments appear.

The initially mild symptoms lead to a delay in seeking treatment and so damage can spread out, increasing the chance of permanent complications and amputation.

If you have any queries about this alert, please contact Aoife at a.munnelly@sisk.ie

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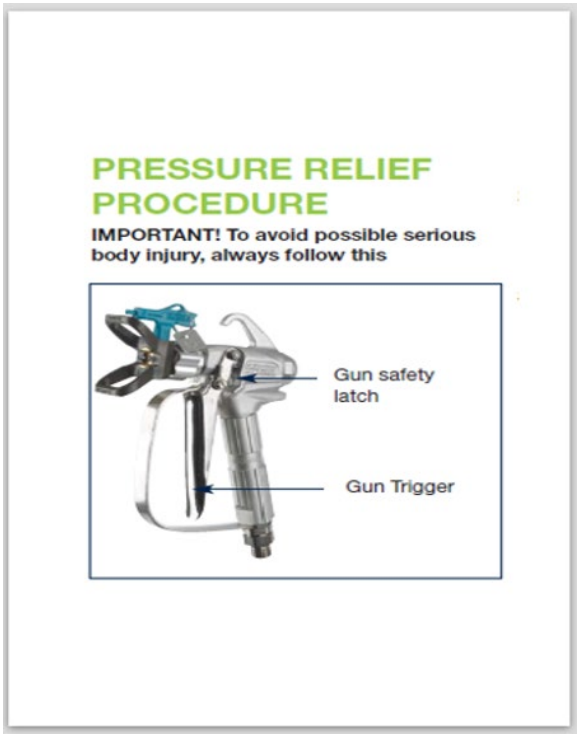
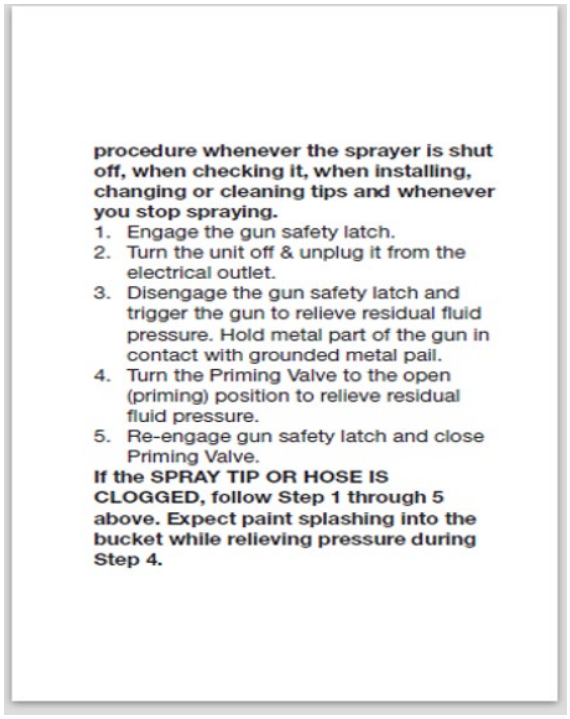
First Aid Response

- Do take the Injured Party to A&E as fast as possible
- Do Not explore the puncture wound
- Do Not use a compression bandage
- Do Not remove the material with a solvent
- Do Not attempt to push the fluid to the outside or make a relieving incision for decompression
- Do Not apply an ice pack to reduce swelling





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