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**COMPRESSED AIR**

What are some hazards associated with the misuse of compressed air?

Before grabbing an air hose and using compressed air, there are a number of hazards that you should keep in mind.

Be sure the air hose is in good condition. An air hose is designed to withstand pressure. However, the hose can be damaged when exposed to repeated mechanical stress such as traffic driving over the hose if it was not protected.

When weak spots develop, the hose can swell up and burst. If a hose bursts under pressure, it can whip or thrash about creating a “struck-by” hazard. Air coming from the damaged hosed can also kick up debris creating an airborne particulate hazard.

The attachment point of a hose to a hose connector is a potential weak spot. If the hose separates from the connector, the hose will whip around creating a struck-by hazard. To guard against unexpected separation of the hose from the connector, a whip check needs to be placed across the hose connection.

Remember that a whip check must be attached to each end of the hose and not to the connectors. A whip check attached to the connectors provides no protection if the connector separates from the hose.

When using compressed air to clean equipment, the pressure must be regulated to below 30 psi. The reason is that higher pressures are more likely to create airborne particulate hazards to the face and eyes. If compressed air is used for cleaning, wear the appropriate level of PPE.

Compressed air can never be used to blow dust off clothing being worn by someone. Vacuuming is preferred.

So when using compressed air hoses;

* Be sure they’re protected from physical damage
* Use whip checks to connect the hose ends, not the connectors
* Regulate air to below 30 psi if used for cleaning …and wear the right PPE
* Never use compressed air to blow dust off clothing