

Safety Note #102

AIR-IMPACT WRENCH SAFETY



Photograph Courtesy of West Side REC

According to information available from the Consumer Product Safety Commission, approximately 3,300 people were treated in hospitals for power tool injuries during 2004. Of these injuries, about 50 percent involved lacerations to the fingers and hand and 10 percent involved abrasions to or objects in the eye.

California Code of Regulations Title 8, Section 3203 (7) requires employees to be trained on the equipment they use in the workplace. **Video E-076 Working with Pneumatic Tools is available from the ANR Environmental Health and**

Safety Library at <http://safety.ucanr.org>.

Pre-Use Activities

- Thoroughly review and understand information provided in the air-impact wrench operator's manual with particular attention given to descriptions of safety procedures.
- Before using, always inspect the air-impact wrench for damage, disrepair, or missing parts, including assessing the condition of the air hose and associated fittings. Assure the air hose and fittings are secured tightly.
- If an air-impact wrench fails the pre-use inspection, notify your supervisor and remove the wrench from service by attaching a red tag that states "DO NOT USE." Complete red tag with appropriate information.

Operating Precautions

- Always wear safety glasses with side protectors when using an impact wrench.
- Never wear a tie, loose clothing, a watch, rings, or jewelry when using an air-impact wrench. Tie long hair back or secure under a cap.
- An air-impact wrench creates a noise exposure of about 103 db. Therefore, always wear hearing protection when using this tool.
- Use clean, dry air at the manufacturer's recommended pressure (about 90 psi) to power the air-impact wrench.
- Only use **impact wrench sockets** that are specifically designed for this type of tool.
- Air-impact wrenches vibrate while being used. Exposure to vibrations may cause tingling, numbing, or painful sensations in the hands, fingers, or arms. If you experience these sensations, stop using the air-impact wrench and seek medical attention if the sensations persist.
- Do not over torque bolts and nuts with an air-impact wrench. Use a torque wrench to apply the proper torque to bolts and nuts.
- Never carry an air-impact wrench by the air hose.
- Always disconnect the air hose before installing or adjusting impact wrench sockets or before performing tool maintenance.