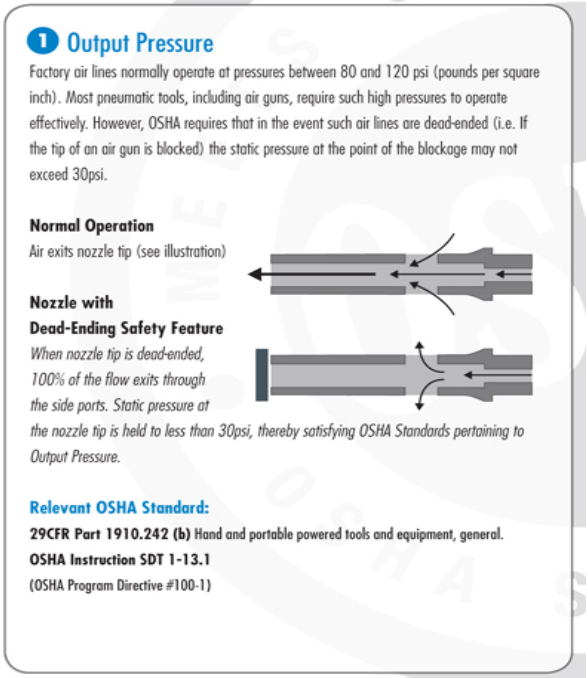
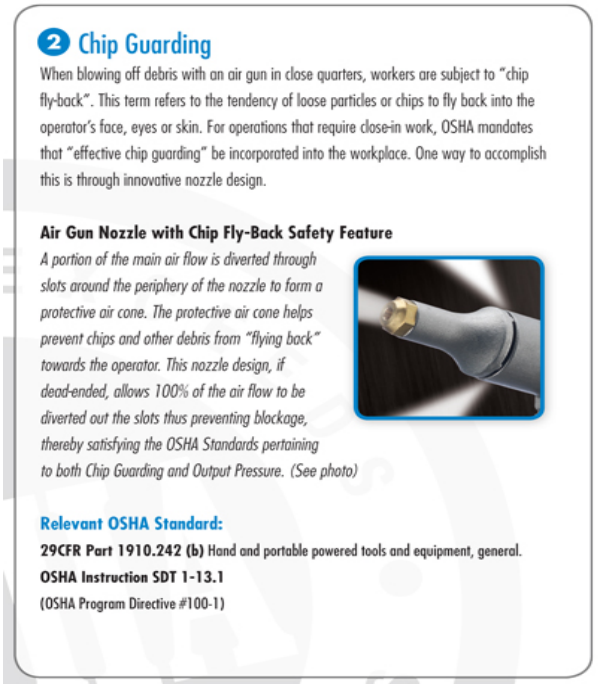
Guardair Corp.’s Bert Perry notes OSHA standards apply to safety tools using compressed air

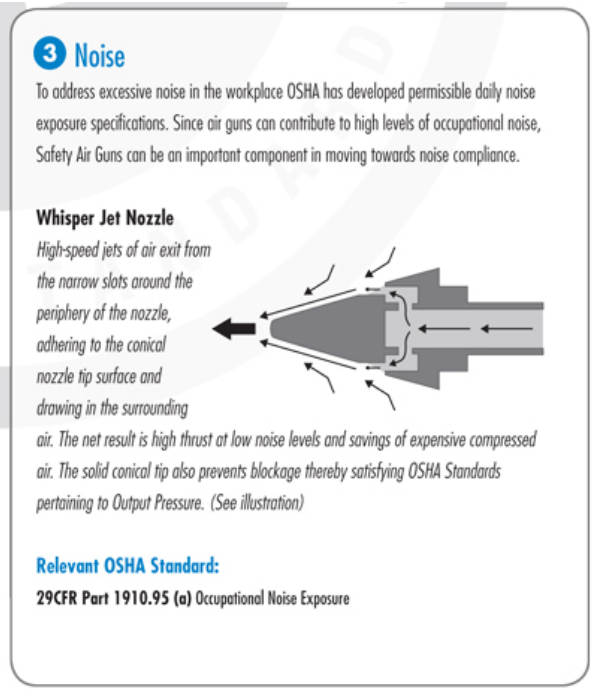
Bert Perry, marketing manager of Guardair Corp., recently addressed air gun safety in a question and answer interview with *Professional Tool & Equipment News.*

PTEN: Can you provide an overview of the OSHA standards as they apply to safety air tools that use compressed air?

Perry: Air guns utilize existing plant compressed air in their operation -- compressed air that can be extremely dangerous if misused, or if horseplay in the workplace takes place. Not only can workers be severely injured from the use of noncompliant, illegal air guns, but compliance failures can mean steep fines for violators. Although the OSHA standards pertaining to air guns are somewhat lengthy, the following images summarize OSHA's three main concerns:







For further details please see the attached document. You can also see more info on the Guardair website at http://www.guardaircorp.com/guardaircorp/osha_regulations.html

PTEN: What types of injuries have been associated with blow guns that use compressed air?
Perry: Eye injuries from flying debris and air embolisms from compressed air entering the body.

PTEN: Are some air guns and pneumatic vacuums built to automatically comply with OSHA standards?
Perry: Yes. All of our air guns comply with OSHA. We have one rubber tip nozzle that we sell separately that does not.

PTEN: Many people associate OSHA standards with manufacturing. Do the same type of safety issues exist in an automotive service environment?
Perry: Yes. The same rules apply to anyone who uses compressed air.

PTEN: Have there been any injuries in automotive service environments caused by hand tools that use compressed air?
Perry: We have found no instances of injuries in automotive service environments caused by hand tools that use compressed air.

PTEN: How important is noise exposure in an automotive service environment?
Perry: OSHA has regulations which require workplaces to be below a specific decibel level. Air guns add to noise pollution. There are a variety of Safety Air Guns available in the market, which are quiet and help lower, the dB.

PTEN: Have there been any OSHA violations pertaining to noise exposure in an automotive service environment?
Perry: We are unaware of any OSHA violations caused by noise exposure in an automotive service environment.

PTEN: Aside from OSHA rules, what liabilities and/or safety issues might an automotive service shop face with blow guns that use compressed air?
Perry: OSHA regs are put in place to protect workers. Aside from the chance a business could be fined from OSHA, there is the risk of physical harm from compressed air entering the body and causing an air embolism. To protect against this, it is important that an air gun's air output is below 30psi if dead-ended.

PTEN: What safety equipment should be used when working with blow guns that use compressed air?
Perry: Workers using compressed air for cleaning should use Safety Air Guns that comply with OSHA as well as wear appropriate eye and ear protection.

PTEN: Where can someone get more information about OSHA rules?
Perry: Our website http://www.guardaircorp.com/guardaircorp/osha_regulations.html or the OSHA website http://www.osha.gov. Our website has links to the specific OSHA regs.