

Compressed Air - Risk Assessment

Compressed Air Safety provides specific guidance on the component parts of compressed air systems and covers in detail: compressor plant; air receivers; portable pneumatic plant; and circuit design; inspection and maintenance; and training.

The main ways in which compressed air can be dangerous are as follows:

1. It can enter body orifices such as the mouth, ears and anus, causing severe and often fatal injuries.
2. At high pressure it can penetrate the skin.
3. Particles or oil carried in an air jet can damage the eyes.
4. Oil-coke deposits in a system can spontaneously ignite and cause an explosion.
5. Vessels containing compressed air, even at comparatively low pressure, can explode violently once their integrity is lost.
6. Dirty or wet air can cause a system to fail, e.g. by blocking safety-related valves.
7. The sudden rupture or parting of compressed air lines or connections can result in persons being struck by the hose, being knocked off balance, or being struck by flying particles or objects.
8. Excessive noise.

Risk Assessment Managers will ensure that:

1. All plant and equipment, both fixed and portable, used in conjunction with compressed air complies with the requirements of the Safety Policy – Provision and Use of Work Equipment.
2. Compressed air equipment is only used by personnel who have been trained in the use of that equipment. Managers will ensure that they are instructed to follow and are issued with the general guidance given in Appendix 1 – Working with Compressed Air Tools.
3. Hand-held tools that use compressed air as a source of power comply with the requirements of the Safety Policy – Hand and Arm Vibration.
4. Where compressed air equipment is used, an assessment of noise levels is made and the necessary procedures put into place in accordance with the Safety Policy – Control of Noise at Work. Inspection, Maintenance and Records All compressed air plant and equipment will be inspected and examined in accordance with either the manufacturers' instructions or a schedule approved by a competent person. It should be noted that where component parts of a compressed air system are subject to the Pressure Systems and Transportable Gas Containers Regulations, they will require a written scheme of examination drawn up or certified by a competent person. Training Managers must ensure that all personnel under their control who, in the course of their work, use compressed air, are adequately trained safely to use the plant and equipment involved.



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