

Even air can be dangerous

Safety is important when dealing with compressed air

Portable air compressors are a common power source on most construction sites. So common in fact, that people may not be vigilant against the hazards of compressed air.

Compressors

- Follow manufacturer's recommendations for operation and maintenance. Only trained technicians should adjust compressor components.
- Do not adjust safety, blow-off or control valves without referring to the operating manual. Improper adjustments can cause "air explosions" from the safety valve, startling or injuring operators.
- Do not change filters or check fluids while the compressor is running or pressurized. Spraying fluids such as oil can cause burns or serious injury.
- Check the tire pressure and tread wear. Poorly maintained tires can affect road handling, damage the wheel and make transportation dangerous.
- Ensure that pressure and temperature gauges are working.
- Check that all lights are working properly.



Air hose

- Use an air hose rated for the maximum compressor pressure and flow.
- Do not allow your hoses to be run over by vehicles or stored improperly. Cracks or weak spots are wasteful and dangerous to the operator.
- Make sure that the hose and compressor discharge fittings match. Always use the safety pin to prevent the fittings from disconnecting. If a pressurized air hose breaks loose, "fish tailing" may injure workers and damage equipment.
- Depressurize the hose prior to disconnecting.

Air tools

- Inspect all air tools to ensure proper operation. Make sure all components are tight and that no parts are missing or damaged.
- Consult your tool steel catalog for proper tool steel selection and application.
- Check air pressure to ensure proper working

pressure of the tool.

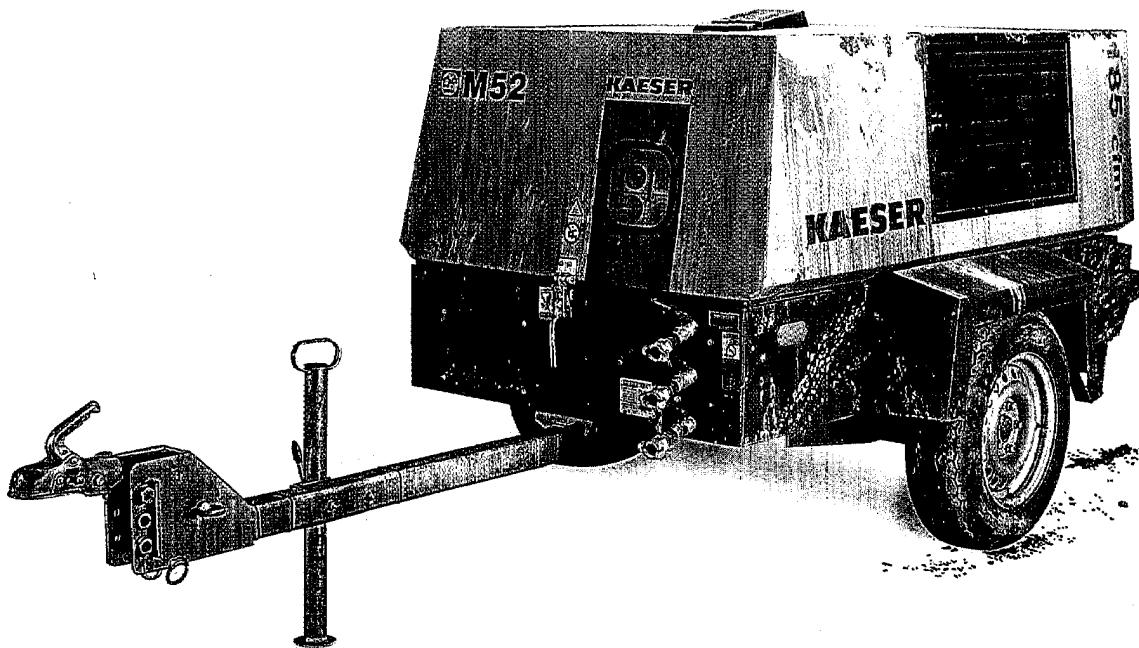
- Always purchase the best air tool lubricant available to prolong equipment and tool steel life.
- Do not use the tool for anything other than the intended purpose.
- To avoid damage to front-end parts, do not hammer on the way out when using a chipping gun or larger breaker.
- Do not turn the tool toward your body or anyone else.
- Do not adjust, remove, or store tools without disconnecting the air supply and relieving the air pressure in the hose.
- Do not change the tool steel or any accessories without disconnecting the air supply.
- Do not leave the tool idle while connected.
- Do not operate an air tool with damaged tool steel.

Instruction

- Advise your customers and employees on the proper safety gear for the intended application. Goggles, safety shoes, gloves, hearing protection and job-specific gear are a must when operating construction tools.
- Provide a mini instruction course and safety pamphlet on safe compressor operation. Review precautions with new and regular users alike.
- Check the safety chain. Attach it properly to a vehicle structure that can support the load if the coupling accidentally disengages. Cross the chain and leave enough slack to properly catch the tow bar. The chain should not drag on the ground, but should allow the vehicle to turn without pulling the chain tight.
- Always match the vehicle's ball-hitch to the compressor's tow bar.
- Remind your customers and employees — air is dangerous! Do not point compressed air lines at people for any reason. No "dusting" or "cleaning yourself off" — serious injury or death might occur.

If air compressors are a part of your business, then compressor safety is too. When in doubt, consult your operation manual or contact the manufacturer with questions. ■

Information for this article was provided by Kaeser Compressors.



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