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During the team's assessment, researchers were often assured that the tools were safe to use, even in the context of a salesperson relaying a story about somebody else that got hurt. For example, one person explained the tools were safe but then indicated you could shoot a nail through your hand.

"We were all surprised at being reassured that the tools were safe while also being told about people who had been injured," Lipscomb said. "We were also surprised by the attitude of being very much accepting of injury."

One salesperson in a lumberyard told one of the researchers to, "get a buddy and the operator's manual and four or five beers and you're good to go."

"This cavalier attitude about the use of a potentially lethal tool is irresponsible and very disturbing," Lipscomb said.

More than 35,000 injuries from nail guns are treated in U.S. emergency departments every year and about 14,000 are among consumers. Lipscomb's research, published in 2007, showed a surge in nail gun injury rates as use of the tools became more widespread among consumers. Since then, Lipscomb's team has focused its research on safety awareness related to the sequential trigger, which cuts the risk of acute injury in half when used instead of the more common contact trip trigger.

"Since there is not a requirement for the safer trigger, the point of sale becomes a very vital source of information about the tools and their triggers," Lipscomb explained.

Lipscomb and her colleagues believe the problem is that sales personnel do not have access to the information that they need and are not aware of the voluntary industry standard issued in 2003 that called for nail guns to be shipped with the safer sequential trigger. They believe this demonstrates the lack of effectiveness from such voluntary standards.

"Unfortunately, neither the Consumer Product Safety Commission nor the Occupational Safety and Health Administration have requirements that address the acute injury risk associated with use of these tools," Lipscomb said. She sees an opportunity for these two gover2.8719.31J0 -1tiS2.413.gxg7.8(0019 TwtTcisk associated)Tjted