

LEGISLATIVE INTERPRETATIONS

Topic: Powder Actuated Tools – Operator Certificates	Issued by: Director, Compliance and Regulatory Review
Statute: General Regulation 91-191	Date Issued: September 19, 2017
Section: 88(a)(i)	Date Revised:

Question

Do you need a license to operate powder actuated tools?

Answer

Employees do not need a “license” to operate a powder actuated tool. However, they must have a valid operator’s certificate. Certificates are normally provided by the tool’s supplier or manufacturer following training. The certificate is valid only for the make and model of the specific tool. In some circumstances, federal legislation requires licensing for the storage and use of the explosive charges used in these tools (see **Additional Information** below).

A powder actuated tool (also known as a Hilti gun or Ramset gun) by definition uses an explosion to propel and discharge fasteners. They should be operated with the same precautions as firearms.

An employer must ensure employees have a valid operator’s certificate and must authorize employees to operate a powder actuated tool. In addition, the authorized employee(s) must be competent to use the tool. Competent is defined as:

(a) qualified, because of such factors as knowledge, training and experience, to do assigned work in a manner that will ensure the health and safety of persons,

(b) knowledgeable about the provisions of the Act and the regulations that apply to the assigned work, and

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(c) knowledgeable about potential or actual danger to health or safety connected with the assigned work;

With respect to powder actuated tools a competent operator would be:

- (a) qualified, by completing the training required to obtain an operator's certificate and being able to demonstrate knowledge of the tool;
- (b) knowledgeable about Sections 87 to 89 of the General Regulation 91-191; and
- (c) knowledgeable about the hazards related to using the powder actuated tool.

Finally, the powder actuated tool and its explosive charges must be properly stored in an area only accessible to authorized employees.

Additional Information

Note on federal requirements:

Powder actuated tool blanks are also regulated by the *Canada Explosives Act* under the Explosives Regulation in Part 12. Under this federal legislation, a permit or license may be required.

For additional information contact: Explosives Regulatory Division

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Referenced Legislation

S. 88 An employer shall ensure that

(a) no employee operates a powder actuated tool unless the employee

(i) has been trained in the use of the specific make and model of the tool to be used and is in possession of a valid operator's certificate,

(ii) is competent to use the tool, and

(iii) is authorized to use the tool, and

(b) all powder actuated tools and their explosive charges are kept in a storage area that is accessible only to persons who are authorized to handle them.