



# AVOIDING INAPPROPRIATE USES OF COMPRESSED AIR

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Compressed air is one of the most expensive forms of energy in a plant. Compressed air is often described as the “fourth utility,” which can be costly to an organization when used inappropriately. However, when used wisely and appropriately, compressed air provides a reliable source to power industrial processes in nearly every industry.

Compressed air is clean, readily available and simple to use. As a result, compressed air is often chosen for

applications for which other energy sources are more economical. Users should always consider more cost-effective forms of power before considering compressed air for purposes like those outlined below.

Many operations can be accomplished more economically using alternative energy sources. Inappropriate uses of compressed air include any application that can be done more effectively or efficiently by a method other than compressed air.

Examples of potentially inappropriate uses of compressed air, along with suggested alternative solutions, include:

- **Open blowing** – brushes, brooms, blowers, nozzles, electric fans
- **Sparging** – low-pressure blowers and mixers
- **Aspirating** – low-pressure blowers
- **Atomizing** – low-pressure blowers
- **Padding** – low to medium pressure blowers
- **Dense-phase transport** – low to high pressure blowers
- **Vacuum generation** – dedicated vacuum pump or central vacuum pump
- **Equipment or personnel cooling** – fans
- **Open blowing** – brushes, brooms, blowers, electric fans, mixers, nozzles
- **Vacuum venturis** – dedicated vacuum pump or central vacuum system
- **Plant clean up** – low-pressure blowers, brooms, nozzles or electric fans

Just like leaving lights on in every room of your house when unoccupied, or leaving the thermostat turned up high when you're not home, there are some simple ways to keep the cost of your compressed air more affordable.