

# Construction worker lives after nail to heart

Gainesville man survives a nail gun accident, cardiac arrest and surgery to remove the nail but decides not to buy a lottery ticket.

Daniel Harper, 52, is home and recovering after giving his wife and coworker quite a scare.

Harper was on the roof of a new homesite with his coworker Jerry Reeker, 28 of Newberry, when his nail gun jammed.

The two men work for Lean on Us Builders. Harper has worked there for nine years. Harper tried to fix the nail gun, but it inadvertently went off and sent a four-inch long nail into his chest.

Reeker reacted immediately, "I didn't have time to be scared. I just went into automatic drive and tried to get Daniel help." Reeker called 911 on his cell phone, kept calm and told Harper not to move.

Paramedics and firefighters arrived to the scene and got Harper off the roof. They rushed him to University of Florida Health Shands Hospital. Dr. Terrell Walker, cardiac surgeon at the hospital, explained that the nail pierced the right ventricle of Harper's heart, causing Harper to go into cardiac arrest quickly after.

"His recovery from surgery has been remarkable, and I was glad to be able to send him home to his family." Dr. Walker was able to close the hole with no problems and said Harper's heart was strong. "He's super lucky. I told him he should go play the lottery."

Harper feels he's already won the lottery by living. His wife, Janice, explained that the family has had quite "a roller coaster couple of weeks." Their first grandson was born recently, on Mr. Harper's birthday, just a week prior to the nail gun accident.

The family is elated that Mr. Harper will get to watch his grandson grow after such an incredible experience. According to Harper, the moral of the story is, “Don’t point a nail gun at yourself, even if you think it’s jammed.”