

HAND ARM VIBRATION

Purpose: To provide employers with guidance on how to reduce the risk of hand-arm vibration injuries

Instructions

TYPES OF INJURIES

Vibration can cause damage to:-

- Arteries
- Nerves
- Bones
- Muscles

Leading to Hand - Arm Vibration Syndrome (HAVS) and Vibration White Finger (VWF), sometimes called "dead hand".

Symptoms of HAVS and VWF are:-

- Numb fingers
- Loss of sensitivity in hand
- Painful throbbing of hands
- Loss of grip strength in hands

TYPES OF WORK ACTIVITY

- Chain-saw and similar hand-held forestry equipment and woodworking machines.
- Power hammers and chisels.
- Manual grinding work.
- Riveting tools.

WHAT EMPLOYERS CAN DO TO PREVENT INJURY

- Purchase low vibration equipment. Refer to the supplier or manufacturer for additional information.
- Consider whether the job can be done without using high vibration tools.
- Make sure Employees use the right tools for the job
- Ensure that equipment is well maintained and cutting tools are sharp.
- See whether the job can be altered to reduce grip and pressure that employees have to apply
- But above all else, ensure employees are fully trained and understand the dangers of Hand - Arm Vibration Syndrome (HAVS) and Vibration White Finger (VWF), See Employee Information and Training Section.

OTHER MEASURES

- Design work breaks to avoid long periods of exposure to vibration.
- Enable Employees to keep warm in cold conditions by

providing heating and thermal clothing.

- Advise Employees to exercise fingers and hands to help blood flow.

EMPLOYEE INFORMATION AND TRAINING

To include:

- Hazards and signs of injury.
- Good working practices to reduce vibration directed at the hand.
- How to grip tools properly for safe operation.
- The need to maintain good blood circulation and keeping warm.
- Exercising fingers.
- The benefit of stopping or cutting down on smoking (smoking reduces circulation).
- How to report any signs of injury.

HEALTH SURVEILLANCE

Routine health checks for employees using high vibration tools should enable early detection of injuries and allow for medical assessment and advice.

IMPORTANT

VWF is reportable under the Reporting of Injuries Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulation (RIDDOR).

Wearing gloves may help, but, so called 'anti vibration' gloves are not normally effective in reducing vibration exposure.

Important Notice: Your Health & Safety Information Sheet is for guidance only. It does not replace our written Health & Safety policies and procedures and you must make sure you are fully aware of these.

Training Courses: For more details on our Health & Safety Training courses available, please contact our learning Zone department via email:

learningzone@shrec.org.uk or visit our website: www.shrec.org.uk