

Introduction

This leaflet is aimed at people who use powered hand tools or work equipment but also applies to those workers that handle workpieces which vibrate whilst being processed by powered machinery, such as pedestal grinders & polishing lathes.

What is hand-arm vibration?

Hand-Arm Vibration is vibration that is transmitted into your hands and arms when you use these types of equipment. It can cause Hand-Arm Vibration Syndrome (HAVS) and Vibration induced Carpal Tunnel Syndrome (V-CTS).

What is Hand-Arm Vibration Syndrome (HAVS)?

- May affect the nerves, blood vessels, muscles, connective tissue, and joints of the hands & wrists.
- It can become severely disabling if ignored.
- It can cause symptoms such as pain, discomfort tingling & numbness.

What is Vibration Induced Carpal Tunnel Syndrome (V-CTS)?

V-CTS is a nerve disorder characterised by tingling & numbness at rest. Unlike other forms of CTS, there may be residual symptoms following decompression surgery which may be made worse by further exposure.

How can I help reduce the risks?

It is your employer's responsibility to protect you from HAVS and V-CTS.

You can help by asking your employer if your job could be done in a different way without using vibrating tools and machines.

If this cannot happen:

- Ask to use suitable low vibration (good quality) tools.
- Always use the right tool for each job (to do the job more quickly and expose you to less hand-arm vibration).
- Check tools before using them to make sure they have been properly maintained and repaired to avoid increased vibration caused by faults or general wear.
- Ensure that cutting tools are kept sharp so that they remain efficient.
- Reduce the amount of time you use a tool in one go, by doing other jobs in between (recovery time).
- Avoid overtight gripping or forcing a tool or workpiece more than you must.

Look after your own health by:

- Encouraging good blood circulation by:
 - Keeping warm and dry, e.g., wear warm appropriate gloves & clothing.
 - Giving up or cutting down on smoking because smoking reduces blood flow.
 - Massaging and exercising your fingers during work breaks.
- Report any problems with your hands promptly to your employer or Occupational Health professional.
- Stick within tool use limits imposed by your employer.
- Use any control measures that your employer has put in place to reduce the risk of injury.
- Ask your trade union safety representative or employee representative for advice.

Further Information

Your employer has certain legal obligations that they must fulfil if they expose employees to hand transmitted vibration.

If you wish to know more, please visit the HSE's website:

<https://www.hse.gov.uk/vibration/hav/index.htm>

Further information regarding The Control of Vibration at Work Regulations 2005 can be found here:

<https://www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/books/l140.htm>

Sample tool magnitude data can be found at:

<https://www.hse.gov.uk/vibration/hav/advicetoemployers/assessrisks.htm#exposure>

Advice on practical ways to reduce the risk:

<https://www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/books/hsg170.htm>

Information in this leaflet is based on HSE document indg296 – rev1.

The original document can be found here:

<https://www.hse.gov.uk/vibration/hav/indg296.htm>

A copy of this & other documentation can be found from

<https://mohs.co.uk/resources> or using the QR code below.



23.3 Hand-Arm Vibration: A Guide for Exposed Employees



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