HSP 4f: Procedure for Assessing and Controlling Hand Arm Vibration

AUTHORISATION:	Signature	Date

Purpose and Scope

This procedure defines the system to be adopted at any Company workplace or site, for the control of exposure to Hand Arm Vibration.

Procedure

Whilst the Director responsible for H&S has overall responsibility for overseeing Health and Safety within the Company, the Site Supervisor shall ensure that:

- All risks of exposure to hand arm vibration are assessed, minimised and otherwise controlled so far as is reasonably practicable on their site

The guidance contained in the following procedure explains how this may be achieved.

Introduction

Construction workers, exposed to vibration as a result of operating hand-held power tools and machinery may be at risk from injuries known as Hand Arm Vibration Syndrome (HAVS). The most common HAVS injury is Vibration White Finger (VWF). Since no cure for VWF currently exists, preventative measures are the only means of protecting Company employees and others who might be exposed to vibration

Regulatory Requirements

The Health and Safety at Work, etc Act 1974, and the Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999, oblige all employers to do everything that is reasonably practicable to prevent an individual from being injured by the hazards at work, including vibration

European legislation regarding vibration exposure reduction was passed in 2002 when the European Parliament authorised the implementation of a directive specifically written for reducing vibration exposure. This is known as the Physical Agents (Vibration) Directive (2002/44/EC). In the UK this directive has now been enacted through the Control of Vibration at Work Regulations 2005 (the Vibration Regulations) which came into force on 6 July 2005 and aim to protect workers from risks to health from vibration..

These regulations require employers to:-

- Reduce vibration exposure to a minimum
- Provide information and training to exposed employees
- Assess vibration exposure levels
- Ensure that when vibration exposure reaches the exposure action value of 2.5 m/s^2 A(8) a programme of measures to reduce exposure is carried out and health surveillance provided
- Keep vibration exposure below the exposure limit value of 5.0 m/s^2 A(8).

Implementing the Requirements of the Control of Vibration at Work Regulations

As there are no cures for Hand Arm Vibration Syndrome preventative procedures are the only means of protecting individuals from the adverse effects of hand-transmitted vibration.

Thus, the Company seeks to proactively implement a series of measures, designed to manage and control Hand Arm Vibration exposure associated with its operations and meet the requirements of the forthcoming legislation. These measures will enable us to ensure that the levels of HAVS hazards and risks are systematically and progressively reduced.

Responsibilities for Implementation

Site Supervisors are responsible for the day-to-day implementation of the Control of Vibration at Work Regs 2005 throughout the areas under their control. To discharge these responsibilities they are required to:-

- **Keep vibration exposure to a minimum through such means as:-**

  Providing breaker and drill attachments that can be fitted onto appropriate vehicles to avoid the use of hand-held breakers and drills;

  Providing chemical surface retarders, rather than hand-held scabblers to score and prepare concrete in readiness for the next layer.

  If hand-held power tools have to be used, when no other mechanical method is feasible, provide the appropriate tool(s) for the task. Only portable hand-held power tools, plant and equipment which have been identified by the Company and comply with the Company's policy on hiring portable hand-held power tools, plant and equipment will be allowed on-site.

- **Provide information and training to exposed employees through such means as:-**

  Formal HAVS awareness induction training prior to any new employee commencing work and providing after the first 30 days of work follow-up reviews, to ensure that employees have understood the induction training.

  Appropriate information on the vibration levels and subsequent A(8) exposure limits on tools and machinery used on-site.

- **Ensure that assessments on vibration exposure levels are provided by such means as:-**

  Measuring or obtaining the vibration levels transmitted by all hand-held power tools and machinery used on-site and calculating the subsequent A(8) exposure values, for example, a tool which transmits 5.0 m/s^2 will have a Control of Vibration at Work Regs. 2005 Value A(8) of two hours per day, per employee.

  The Company has undertaken generic risk assessments and has produced a recommended hand-tools and machinery listing. This document is updated twice a year and provides all necessary risk assessment information needed for project work.

  Site Supervisors ensure that, wherever possible, lower vibration tools from the list are used on site.

Responsibilities for Implementation
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Once a year an independent assessor will be appointed by the Company to undertake vibration monitoring and risk assessments on all tools and machinery found on-site. This independent spot-check will identify whether each tool/machine is:-

- Transmitting levels of vibration as defined in the Directive
- Well maintained and serviced
- Kept in a good working condition.

If the independent assessor's report indicates that certain tools and machinery are transmitting levels of vibration above the levels that those tools and machines should transmit, and that they are not being well maintained and serviced, or kept in a good working condition, the Company will act upon the recommendations provided in the independent assessor's report.

Actions for Continuous Improvement

- **Provide a programme of measures to reduce vibration exposure when exposure reaches the action value of 2.5 m/s^2 A(8) by such means as:-**

  Job rotation.

  Providing or investigating whether tools and/or machinery with lower levels of vibration can be used or obtained.

  Using mechanical, non-human contact tools and/or machinery.

- **Ensure that vibration exposure is kept below the exposure limit value of 5.0 m/s^2 A(8)**.

  The limit value as described in the Control of Vibration at Work Regulations 2005 is the A(8) exposure value that must not be exceeded, for example, a tool which transmits 5.0 m/s^2 will have a Control of Vibration at Work Regulations Limit Value A(8) of eight hours per day, per employee.

- **Implement measures to reach the exposure action value of 2.5 m/s^2 A(8) by such means as:-**

  Providing better hand-held power tools and machinery that have lower vibration readings. Guidance on such tools and machinery is available through the recommended hand tool vibration measurement database which is held by the Company's H&S Consultants. This database is updated following the spot checks undertaken by the Company's H&S Consultants and then translated into a recommended hand-tools and machinery listing which is then circulated to all operating sites.

- **Make arrangements for employees to have health surveillance monitoring as and when required.**

  Seek the advice of the HS&E Co-ordinator or the Company Health and Safety Consultants for guidance as to where health surveillance is appropriate.