



Vibration Policy Toolbox Talk

This toolbox talk is a brief overview of Aberdeenshire Councils Vibration Policy – the full policy is available on Arcadia or from your Line Manager.

Each individual Service is responsible for the management of this policy.

RISK ASSESSMENT

The risks from vibration can be controlled and employees can be protected from ill health caused by vibration.

The Service should inform the Health & Safety Unit of any existing equipment which has not been assessed and modifications made to assessed equipment or changes to work processes, where a review assessment can be undertaken.

ELIMINATION OR CONTROL OF EXPOSURE TO VIBRATION

The measures, which need to be considered following a risk assessment in order to eliminate or reduce the effects of hazardous vibration, are as follows:

Elimination or Substitution; Purchasing policy; Engineered Controls; Procedural Controls; Ergonomic Factors; Reduction in exposure Information, instruction and training; Personal Protective Equipment & Health Surveillance

Possibly the most effective control is a robust purchasing policy that prevents excessive exposure prior to any persons coming into contact with machinery that may cause vibrations. Aberdeenshire Council should use its buying power to put pressure on manufacturers to produce low vibration equipment.

Manufacturer data should be regarded with some caution and prior to purchase; any new equipment should be taken on trial and identified to the Health & Safety Unit for assessment of the vibration levels.

Where possible machinery will be used on trial and assessed by the Health & Safety Unit prior to purchase. Tools suitable for the job, with the lowest vibration levels will, as far as possible, be chosen **unless equipment with a higher vibration level is available that can do the work in less time thus reducing the overall vibration exposure.**

HIRE OF EQUIPMENT

Where possible similar equipment should be hired to that which has already been assessed by the Health & Safety Unit, so that the vibration assessment results can be used as a rough guide.

As a rough guide the HSE state that the values declared by a manufacturer should be doubled to bring it closer to the vibration magnitudes found in real use.

Where an item of plant or equipment is going to be used as a long-term hire or be leased, then the Health & Safety Unit should be contacted, who will undertake a vibration assessment

TAGGING & POINTS SYSTEM

A Tagging System is in place – see Tagging System Toolbox Talk.

Employees must not exceed 400 points in any single working day unless you have been diagnosed by Aberdeenshire Councils' Occupational Health provider as having symptoms relating to HAVS and your points allocation has been reduced.

PERSONAL PROTECTIVE EQUIPMENT

It is important to keep the hands and body warm in order to maintain good blood flow especially to the fingers and reduce the risk of injury. The best way is to keep hands warm and dry by providing additional pairs of dry gloves.

Anti-vibration gloves are not effective at reducing the frequency-weighted vibration associated with the risk of HAVS.

HEALTH SURVEILLANCE

Health surveillance is in place to detect vibration related ill health at an early stage and to act on the results.

Employees should recognise and report symptoms early so that controls can be introduced or reviewed to prevent symptoms developing further.

New employees, who are employed to work with vibrating equipment and those employees who are new to working with vibrating equipment as part of their duties must complete a Tier 1 HAV's Health Surveillance questionnaire before taking up employment.

The questionnaire will be screened by the Health & Safety Unit, and where deemed necessary the individual employee may be asked to see the Council's Occupational Health Provider.

Existing employees who use vibratory tools will be subject to health surveillance.

Employees will be required by their Service to complete an annual health surveillance questionnaire. This will initially be screened by the Council's Occupational Health Nurse Adviser in order to check whether further referral to the Council's Occupational Health Provider is required.

If no symptoms are reported on the screening questionnaire, no referral will be made, although the HSE recommend that after 3 years of a vibration-exposed employee reporting no symptoms they should be referred for a consultation with an Occupational Health Nurse to provide an opportunity to explore more fully any possible symptoms that an individual may have overlooked.

The questionnaire is screened by an Occupational Health Nurse, where further referral to an Occupational Health Physician may be recommended.

The Occupational Health Physician will carry out a medical examination and formal diagnosis. The employer will then be advised of the employee's fitness for work, confirming whether any action has to be taken to reduce exposure.

In certain circumstances the employee may be referred to by the Occupational Health Physician to a Specialist.

Where a reduction of exposure has been recommended, the Service will require the employee to keep a record of the equipment used and the actual time of its use. The recommended levels of exposure must not be exceeded; therefore the Service should keep and monitor the employee's exposure records.

Further health surveillance questionnaires/medical examinations may be conducted at intervals as advised by the Council's Occupational Health Provider.

In the event that an employee is deemed to be unfit to use vibrating tools and there is a requirement to be redeployed, then the employee would utilise the Council's redeployment policy.

RECORDS

The Service will retain copies of all medical reports, exposure records, pre-employment and annual Health Surveillance Questionnaires within their confidential Employee Personal Files.

The Council's Occupational Health Provider will retain all Health Surveillance Questionnaires and medical reports regarding any employee who is referred to them.

As soon as an employee is referred to the Council's Occupational Health Provider an HR Officer is assigned to the referral, and a copy of any report is also forwarded to them.

TRAINING AND COMPETENCE

All employees or agency employees must receive induction training; this training must include instruction & information on HAV and WBV where relevant

Employees should report signs and symptoms of injury to their line manager. Reports of such injuries will be investigated by a competent person and consideration given to referral by the Line Manager for medical assessment to the Occupational Health provider.

AUDIT AND REVIEW

The Health & Safety Unit will undertake safety sampling or health & safety audits of the management systems, which are in place to control and monitor HAV/WBV.

REPORTABLE DISEASES

The Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations 1995 (RIDDOR) require employers to report cases of HAVS arising from certain work activities or of carpal tunnel syndrome associated with exposure to vibration. In the case of HAVS as soon as Stage 1 symptoms have been diagnosed.

The form F2508A must be used to notify the Health & Safety Executive (HSE) as soon as the employer has received a formal written diagnosis from a Doctor confirming the employee has either of these conditions and that there is reason to believe that the disease is likely to have an occupational origin.

All reports must be made via the Council's accident & incident reporting database. Reference should also be made to the guidance note on reporting of accidents and incidents, which is located on 'Arcadia'.

The following forms are available on Arcadia or from your Line Manager

HAV – Tier 1 Health Surveillance Questionnaire
WBV – Health Monitoring Questionnaire
Tagging System
Daily Exposure Sheet (recording points)