



Vibration

Vibration can cause serious and disabling injuries, but many operatives are unaware of the risks. Many construction tools can cause vibration including road breakers, chainsaws, percussive hand tools, rotating hand tools, riveting guns, etc.

Main points:

- Reduce the potential for vibration by careful selection of work equipment (ie use those with vibration absorbing features).
- If using work equipment that causes vibration, then plan the task so that it is broken up with other activities or rotate the task amongst several employees.
- If you think you are suffering from the effects of vibration, then stop the activity immediately and speak to your supervisor. If necessary, seek medical advice.

The warning signs for HAVS

- Pins and needles and/or numbness in your fingers
- The tips of your fingers may go white

- When returning to a warm room after being out in the cold, your hands may go red and feel really painful



Discussion points:

Elimination

Eliminate the need to use vibration equipment where possible. For example, can the route of a pipe be designed and routed away from an area where concrete breaking would be required in order to lay the pipe.

Substitution

Use an alternative operation to achieve the same aims, but with a lower risk. For example, selecting a machine operated breaker over a hand-held.

Engineering controls

Reduce the risk by engineering means. For example, specify hand operated hydraulic breakers that have been engineered to produce less vibration than older equivalent models.

Management control

Select the right tool for the job, and ensure it is regularly maintained. Provide training and supervision to make sure the equipment is used correctly, and personnel are aware of the risks associated with the equipment. Provide frequent work breaks and job rotation to allow for exposure to be equally distributed, reducing an individual's exposure.

Personal protection

Warm gloves and clothing can help reduce risk, by keeping the hands warm, and improving blood flow. Additional measures include regularly exercising hands and fingers during work periods and avoiding smoking. 'Anti-vibration gloves' should not be considered as a means of control as they may have little effect at the most hazardous frequencies and, in some cases, may increase the vibration reaching the hand.



Talk to Atlas about Safety Management for your business

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