



TYSERS
UK DIVISION

Tyser & Co Limited

International Insurance & Risk Management Solutions

Client Briefing No: 22

Vibration at Work Regulations

Nearly a third of companies were unprepared for the new Control of Vibration at Work regulations which came into force 6th July this year.

New research reveals that nearly a third (28 per cent) of heavy industries, such as the construction and manufacturing sector, have no measures in place to manage employees' exposure to vibration in the workplace. This is in spite of the fact of the new Control of Vibration at Work Regulations.

Over half (58%) of firms employing more than 250 people said that their employees were exposed to vibration to at least some extent. However, of this group a quarter (25%) advised that they had, as yet, put no measures in place.

Almost one in 6 (16%) of those who told us their employees are exposed to vibration in the workplace said they have had a claim made against them as a result of injury caused by vibration. One in twenty (5%) of all surveyed admitted to not knowing about the new

legislation relating to hand/arm and whole body vibration at all.

The construction industry tended to feel less prepared than the manufacturing sector. Just over a sixth (17%) of companies operating in the construction industry said they felt unprepared for the new legislation compared to just over one in ten (12%) in the manufacturing sector. Although construction companies are much more likely than other heavy industries to say their employees are exposed to vibration in the workplace.

The Control of Vibration at Work Regulations

The Control of Vibration at Work Regulations implement the European Physical Agents (Vibration) Directive in the UK. They require employers to assess exposure levels and implement a programme of measures to reduce exposure to a minimum. Employers will also have to provide information and training for their staff on vibration and provide health surveillance when exposure to vibration reaches certain levels.

What is vibration at work?

Vibration results when objects oscillate around a fixed position. Ill-health effects can from exposure to both hand-arm vibration, which is usually caused by operating hand-held power tools or machines, and whole-body vibration which is typically transmitted through the feet and can affect drivers of some types of mobile machinery. Examples of workers most at risk in the latter case are long distance lorry drivers and vehicle operators in agriculture, forestry, construction and mining.

Exposure to vibration may result in a range of ill-health conditions such as hand-arm vibration syndrome and vibration white finger.

The number of annual new cases of Vibration White Finger (VWF) assessed for disablement benefit under the Industrial Injuries Scheme (IIS) was 1775 in 2002/03 (1765 males and 10 females). An estimated provisional total of 423 cases of hand-arm vibration syndrome (HAVS) were seen by occupational physicians and rheumatologists in the OPRA/MOSS reporting schemes in 2003. The Medical Research Council (MRC) survey in 1997-98 gave a prevalence estimate of 288'000 sufferers from vibration white finger (VWF) in Great Britain. The number of new cases of carpal tunnel syndrome assessed for disablement benefit continues to rise, with 1035 cases in 2002/03 (940 males and 95 females) a rise from 797 cases in

2001/02 (715 males and 85 females)
(source HSE).

For further information or if you wish to discuss any of these issues, please get in touch with your usual Tyser contact.



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