

Hand Arm Vibration Syndrome Policy

Policy Statement

Envisage Envelope Solutions will put in place measures to protect employees from the risks of Hand Arm Vibration Syndrome (HAV) which can be caused by exposure to vibration.

These measures will include:

- Assessing the risks from vibration exposure
- Taking steps to reduce vibration exposure.
- Considering vibration risks when purchasing or hiring equipment
- Providing training and information for employees on the risks from vibration and the measures in place to reduce these.
- Providing health surveillance where the risk assessment shows that this is appropriate.

Procedures and Guidance

Exposure Limit Value and Exposure Action Value

Exposure Action Value – 2.5 m/s² A(8) (exposure averaged over a day) (EAV).

Wherever exposure at or above this level occurs, certain actions (including health surveillance) are required to control the risk.

Exposure Limit Value – 5m/s² A(8) (exposure averaged over a day) (ELV)

This is the maximum vibration exposure permitted for any individual on a single day. These values are quoted here as they relate to specific duties under the Control of Vibration at Work Regulations. However, the overriding requirements of the Regulations is to reduce vibration exposure to as low a level as is reasonably practicable i.e. to consider whether further reduction is possible even if exposure falls below the EAV.

Risk Assessment

Vibration risk assessment is required if employees work with, for example, hand held tools (e.g. drills, breakers, sanders, chain saws, hedge trimmers) hand guided tools (such as pedestrian lawn mowers, buffers) or materials held against a vibrating object (e.g. use of a grinder, timber being guided through a band saw).

Risk Assessment requires:

Assessment of the vibration magnitude from each piece of equipment used. This information can come from three sources:

1. Accurate data is available from organisations which have measured vibration levels of equipment in real use such as <http://www.operc.com/pages/haveteclogin.asp>
2. Direct measurements of vibration level – this is a specialist area and is not usually necessary or appropriate.

3. Data may be provided by the manufacturer.

Identification of Who May be Affected

Identification of exposure time for those individuals, ensuring this is the 'trigger time' or 'contact time' i.e. the time for which the operators' hands are exposed to vibration, not the overall time spent on the job.

Calculation of daily exposure for individuals, based on this information, remembering that if more than one tool is used in a day the effects will be cumulative. The Health and Safety Executive have produced a 'calculator' which will enable conversion of working times and vibration magnitudes into an overall exposure factor; and the summation of exposures if more than one piece of equipment is used.

Identification of other risk factors, for example work in cold or wet environments increases the health risks from vibration exposure.

Consideration of individual factors for example, the presence of some health conditions may increase risk from vibration exposure and smoking can affect circulation.

The risk assessment should include an action plan which documents the measures already in place to reduce the risk from vibration exposure and any further measures planned. The vibration risk assessment can be a stand alone document, or can be incorporated into the overall risk assessment document for a department or process where this is more appropriate (e.g. where the risk from vibration is very low).

The risk assessment should be reviewed if there is any change in vibration exposure and at least 3 years otherwise.

Reducing Risk from Vibration Exposure

Measures should be put in place to reduce vibration exposure to as low a level as is reasonably practicable – even if vibration levels are below the Exposure Action Value (EAV), consideration should be given as to whether further reduction is practical.

Personal vibration exposure MUST NOT exceed the Exposure Limit Value (ELV) of 5m/s²

Measures to reduce risks from vibration exposure may include:

- Replacing tools and equipment with alternatives which produce lower magnitudes of vibration
- Ensuring work activities are designed to take into account ergonomic principles, and to encourage good posture
- Ensuring all equipment is properly maintained e.g. in accordance with a local maintenance
- Policy/procedure
- Reducing time exposed to vibration e.g. regular breaks, job rotation etc
- Providing suitable clothing to protect employees from cold and damp
- Providing suitable training and information for all those exposed to vibration

Note – wearing "anti-vibration gloves" is not an effective way to reduce risk.

Health Surveillance

Exposure to vibration carries a risk of health effects, this is most likely with exposure above the EAV of 2.5m/s² but may occur at lower exposures.

Hand Arm Vibration Syndrome (HAVS) covers several different conditions, one or more may be present in an affected individual.

Vascular disorders (affecting circulation) – commonly ‘blanching’ of the fingers (especially on exposure to cold or to vibration) often followed by blueness/redness as rewarming occurs.

Neurological disorders – including numbness, tingling of the fingers, reduced strength, reduced sensitivity and loss of dexterity.

Musculo-skeletal symptoms such as joint pain and stiffness, reduces strength and dexterity and carpal tunnel syndrome.

Symptom severity worsens with continued exposure; symptoms may be disabling and are generally irreversible.

HAVS is reportable under RIDDOR.

Carpal tunnel syndrome is reportable under RIDDOR where it is associated with vibration exposure. Health surveillance must be carried out for employees who are regularly exposed to vibration above the exposure action value (2.5 m/s²).

Health surveillance is also required for those exposed below the EAV if they are at increased risk e.g. if they report a pre-existing diagnosis of HAVS or any condition which affects circulation or nerve conduction such as diabetes, primary Reynaud’s, carpal tunnel syndrome etc.

Health surveillance will involve:

Initial assessment – this will be carried out for all employees who are identified as being at risk of exposure even if exposure is likely to be below the EAV of 2.5 m/s². For existing employees, assessment will be carried out once initial risk assessment indicates that this is required. For new employees, this will be carried out at the time of general pre-employment health assessment. It is important that the recruiting officer identifies the need for this as part of the job risk assessment carried out at the time of interview.

Annual assessment – this will be carried out for all those exposed at or above the EAV and for those exposed below the EAV but who have been identified by Occupational Health as being at increased risk of HAVS.

Health surveillance must be carried out by an Occupational Health specialist and will usually be by questionnaire. Face to face review with the OH Adviser and/or OH Physician will be arranged if an individual reports symptom or is at particular risk; or every 3 years otherwise.

Training and Information

All employees who are exposed to vibration should be given training to include:

- The health effects of hand-arm vibration
- Sources of hand-arm vibration

- The risk factors (e.g. the levels of vibration, daily exposure duration, regularity of exposure over weeks, months and years)
- How to recognise and report symptoms
- The need for health surveillance, how it can help them remain fit for work, how it will be provided, and what will happen to the results.
- Ways to minimise risk including:
 - Changes to working practices to reduce vibration exposure.
 - Correct selection, use and maintenance of equipment.
 - Correct techniques for equipment use, how to reduce grip force etc.
 - Maintenance of good blood circulation at work by keeping warm and massaging fingers and, if possible, cutting down on smoking

Training may be face to face e.g. toolbox talk, computer based or through the use of leaflets. Where new staff are employed, they should be made aware of the risks of vibration prior to first exposure, or at least within the first week of employment. This can be done at the same time as asking them to complete the initial health assessment form for return to Occupational Health.

In addition, all employees should be given appropriate training in the use of equipment. This should include periodic supervised practice to identify work practices which may increase risk such as poor postures, gripping equipment too tightly etc.

Responsibilities

Director Responsible for Health and Safety

- Nominate a person(s) (usually a Project Manager) to implement the company HAVS control measures and ensure they have the necessary skills and competencies.
- Support the nominated person(s) in implementing measures to comply with the vibration regulations.
- Ensure all managers and employees discharge their responsibilities in accordance with this policy.
- Liaise with external companies to arrange vibration measurement if required.
- Make RIDDOR reports to the HSE if a case of HAVS or vibration related Carpal Tunnel Syndrome is identified by the OH Physician.

Project Managers and Supervisors

- Understand the scope and content of the Vibration regulations where this is relevant to work in their area.
- Ensure vibration factors are considered when hiring or purchasing new equipment.
- Ensure that necessary vibration risk assessments have been undertaken for any equipment used by those in their charge.

- Implement and enforce vibration control measures.
- Ensure employees are suitably trained in all aspects of operating equipment, including vibration control.
- Ensure new employees are referred for health surveillance.
- Understand the scope and content of the vibration regulations.
- Identify whether risk assessment is required within the department.
- Carry out vibration risk assessment if required.
- Implement vibration control measures where appropriate.
- Identify where health surveillance is required.
- Provide or facilitate training and information for those who may be exposed to vibration.

Employee

- Use all equipment in accordance with instructions.
- Ensure all equipment is well maintained.
- Report any defects or difficulties with vibrating equipment.
- Co-operate with any programme of health surveillance which is identified as necessary following risk assessment.
- Report any relevant symptoms or health changes immediately (i.e. without waiting for the next scheduled health surveillance).
- Attend appropriate training.

Signed:	<i>Scott Mason</i>
Name:	Scott Mason
Title:	Managing Director
Date:	31 st January 2023