

CAERPHILLY COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

CONTROL OF HAND ARM VIBRATION EXPOSURE AT WORK POLICY

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Policy Ratified by:	Health and Safety Division
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Area Applicable:	All Council employees, agency staff and volunteers.
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A greener place Man gwyrdach



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This publication is available in Welsh, other languages or formats on request.

Mae'r cyhoeddiad hwn ar gael yn Gymraeg ac mewn ieithiodd neu fformatau eriall ar gais.

NOTE

Wherever the designation "manager" is used throughout this policy, it is taken to mean Head of Service, Head Teacher, Line Manager, Supervisor and the Officer in charge or anyone who has responsibilities for employees in the course of their work.

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1. This document sets out the policy, and outlines the protective and preventative measures to be implemented by Caerphilly County Borough Council (the Authority), to ensure the health, safety and welfare of its employees in relation to the control of hand-arm vibration (HAV) while at work.
- 1.2. This policy must be read in conjunction with the Corporate Management Arrangements for the Control of Hand Arm Vibration Exposure at Work document that sets out the arrangements and responsibilities for managing the exposure of employees to hand arm vibration while undertaking work activities for the Authority.

2. POLICY STATEMENT

- 2.1. The Authority recognises that its employees are its most valuable resource in delivering high quality services to the community, and will take all practical steps to ensure the health and safety of it's employees, as well as contractors, agency staff and visitors to and users of Authority premises and work equipment by controlling their exposure to hand arm vibration from work equipment and processes.
- 2.2. The Authority recognises there are inherent risks with some work activities which put its employees at greater risk of exposure to work related hand arm vibration. The Authority will therefore assess the risks associated with work activities that present a risk associated with hand arm vibration and consider alternative safer systems of work where reasonably practicable that eliminate the risk at source, or reduce the extent and duration of exposure, so far as is reasonably practicable.
- 2.3. Where control of hand arm vibration is necessary, the effective control of these risks will be achieved through the management systems as set out in this policy, and the provision of appropriate training, information, instruction and supervision. To be effective this policy requires the full co-operation of management and employees at all levels.
- 2.4. The Authority accepts it has specific duties under various health and safety legislation including those specified in Section 5.

3. SCOPE

- 3.1. This policy has been agreed with the Trade Unions and applies to all employees.
- 3.2. This policy will be reviewed at least every 2 years to ensure it is in line with current legislation.
- 3.3. The effective date of the policy is February 2016.

4. DEFINITIONS

4.1. For the purpose of this policy the following definitions are to be used and applied throughout the policy and the supporting Corporate Management Arrangements document:-

- **‘vibration’** - mechanical vibration produced by a piece of machinery or equipment, or in a vehicle as a result of its operation (particularly on uneven ground);
- **‘hand-arm vibration’** (HAV) - mechanical vibration transmitted into the hands and arms, typically as a result of the use of vibrating hand held tools such as power tools and road breakers, and hand-guided equipment such as powered lawnmowers, and strimmers.
- **‘daily exposure’** - the quantity of mechanical vibration to which a worker is exposed during a working day, normalised to an 8-hour reference period, which takes into account of the magnitude and duration of vibration.
- **‘daily exposure limit value’** - the maximum amount of vibration an employee may be exposed to on any single working day, averaged over an 8-hour period:-
 - For hand arm vibration this has been set at 5 m/s² A (8)
- **daily exposure action value** - the level of daily exposure to vibration above which there is a requirement to take action to reduce exposure, averaged over an 8-hour period:-
 - For hand–arm vibration this has been set at 2.5m/s² A (8)
- **m/s²A(8)** - the unit of measurement for the total exposure to vibration, averaged over an 8 hour period.
- **m/s²A(8)_{week}** - the unit of measurement for the total exposure to vibration occurring within a seven-day period, averaged over a period of five 8-hour days (40 hours). This averaging period rarely applies and relates to occasional exposures above the exposure action value, eg unavoidable activities of high exposure but low frequency ie; emergency work.
- **‘working day’** - a daily working period, irrespective of the time of day when it begins and ends, and of whether it begins or ends on the same calendar day.
- **‘risk assessment’** - all assessments relating to the identification and assessment of hazards and risks associated with vibration and of the effectiveness of risk-control measures.
- **‘equipment’** - includes all hand tools, mobile and fixed plant /machinery and vehicles with the potential to cause harm through vibration as a direct or indirect result of its use.
- **a ‘survey’** - a visit to an Authority premises to conduct vibration measurement on selected ‘equipment’.
- **‘employees’**- all persons employed by the Authority conducting any activity relating to the Authority’s undertaking whether for payment or otherwise (eg. volunteers and those on work experience placements.) This also includes temporary and agency staff.
- **‘competent person’** refers to a person with the appropriate knowledge, theoretical and practical understanding, training, experience and personal qualities that make them qualified to make informed decisions regarding the control of vibration exposure in connection with work activities.
- **‘contractor’** - any person (or persons) who is not an ‘employee’ but who is authorised by the Authority to carry out work on its behalf.

5. LEGISLATION

- 5.1. This policy, along with its supporting procedures, is designed to ensure the Authority meets its legal obligations under the following legislation:-
- The Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974
 - The Control of Vibration at Work Regulations 2005
 - The Provision and Use of Work Equipment Regulations 1998 (PUWER) (as amended)
 - The Supply of Machinery (Safety) Regulations 1992 (as amended)
 - The Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999
 - The Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations 1995 (RIDDOR)

6. RESPONSIBILITIES

6.1. The Chief Executive Officer will:

- 6.1.1. Be ultimately responsible for ensuring compliance with this policy within Caerphilly County Borough Council.

6.2. Directors and Heads of Service will:

- 6.2.1 Be responsible for ensuring the effective implementation of this Corporate Policy, the Corporate Management Arrangements, associated Directorate policies and local management arrangements within their service areas;
- 6.2.2 Ensure that appropriate resources are made available for the effective operation of this policy, including training.

6.3. Managers with responsibilities for employees will:

- 6.3.1 Identify all work activities and equipment where potential exposure to hand arm vibration could occur;
- 6.3.2 Appoint a 'competent person' (as defined in Section 4) to assist in the effective elimination or control of exposure to vibration that may put employees' health at risk.
- 6.3.3 Undertake, or ensure that, a suitable and sufficient risk assessment is undertaken for employees exposed to vibration, and ensure the findings are communicated to all employees to whom the assessment concerns. Please refer to the Corporate Management Arrangements for information on carrying out and recording risk assessments;
- 6.3.4 Take action to prevent exposure to hand arm vibration, wherever it is reasonably practicable to do so. Where this is not possible, ensure that hand arm vibration exposure is reduced to the minimum level achievable;
- 6.3.5 For employees who are exposed to vibration levels at, or above, the Exposure Action Value (as defined in Section 4), ensure:-
- that exposure is eliminated at source,
 - or, where this is not possible, reduced as far as is reasonably practicable.

- Information, instruction and training is made available regarding the risks associated with the use of vibrating equipment or processes and the control measures to be implemented to minimise the risks.

This will require a programme of control measures, as set out in the supporting Corporate Management Arrangements for the Control of Hand Arm Vibration Exposure at Work.

- 6.3.6 Where required, ensure that vibrating equipment usage logs are used to monitor and record exposure (eg; see Appendix G of the Corporate Management Arrangements);
- 6.3.7 Ensure that employees are not exposed to vibration above the Exposure Limit Value, defined in Section 4;
- 6.3.8 Ensure low vibration and ergonomic design features have been considered when purchasing or hiring equipment or machinery.
- 6.3.9 Ensure that data regarding the vibration magnitude associated with normal use of the equipment is obtained from the supplier/manufacturer;
- 6.3.10 Ensure planned preventative maintenance of vibrating hand tools and processing equipment, including the sharpening of cutting tools and lubrication of moving components as and when required and in line with manufacturers' guidelines;
- 6.3.11 Ensure equipment identified as, or suspected of, being faulty is taken out of use for service, repair or replacement as necessary;
- 6.3.12 Ensure that employees are provided with sufficient training and information on;
- how to select the most appropriate tool and accessory/attachment for a job, and
 - how to use and maintain the work equipment to minimise vibration exposure;
- 6.3.13 Ensure all new employees, or those changing jobs, who will be exposed to vibration for the first time, are given suitable information about the hazards of vibration exposure, the potential health symptoms associated with vibration exposure, and the potential long-term health consequences of failing to promptly report symptoms of HAVS;
- 6.3.14 Ensure that all new employees, or those changing jobs, that will be exposed to hand arm vibration due to their work for the first time, are issued with the initial screening for HAVS questionnaire (see Corporate Management Arrangements - Appendix H), and that employees complete and send them to Occupational Health for screening;
- 6.3.15 Ensure, where possible, that employees diagnosed with any significant medical condition or restriction, resulting from exposure to vibration are assigned, as appropriate, to activities where there is no further exposure or exposure is controlled to the recommendations of occupational health. In such circumstances an employee risk assessment must be carried out.

- 6.3.16 Ensure that any employee with any diagnosed condition resulting from exposure to vibration is provided with information and advice regarding future surveillance requirements;
- 6.3.17 Ensure that each employee exposed to vibration in connection with their work activities is issued with a copy of the annual medical screening questionnaire on an annual basis;
- they report any health symptoms associated with exposure to vibration, or
 - as recommended by an Occupational Health specialist,
- and that these questionnaires are completed and sent to Occupational Health for screening;
- 6.3.18 Ensure that employees have been made aware of the reporting procedures for raising concerns relating to the use and handling of vibrating equipment, and symptoms associated with vibration exposure;
- 6.3.19 Ensure employees understand the provisions for support the Authority has in place following referral to Occupational Health;
- 6.3.20 Maintain confidentiality regarding any information received from Occupational Health regarding the significant findings of any health surveillance relating to employees;
- 6.3.21 Ensure arrangements are in place for keeping records of equipment maintenance and Vibrating Equipment Usage Logs;
- 6.3.22 Ensure this policy is communicated to their employees and temporary staff under their control;
- 6.3.23 Ensure employees comply with this policy and associated Directorate arrangements for control of hand-arm vibration derived from this policy;

6.4. The Competent Person will:

- 6.4.1. Complete a training course in vibration exposure management, including common causes of excess vibration magnitude and exposure, practical measures to reduce exposure, methods of measuring and calculating daily exposure.
- 6.4.2. Ensure a suitable and sufficient risk assessment is carried out regarding the exposure of Authority employees to vibration while at work, and that the findings are reported to the relevant Line Manager, relevant Directorate Health and Safety Officer.
- 6.4.3. Make recommendations, as required, for engineering or control methods to eliminate or reduce exposure to vibration exposure to the lowest practicable levels;

6.5. Each employee of the Authority will:

- 6.5.1. Comply with any working procedure and control measures introduced to minimise the risk associated with exposure to hand-arm vibration;
- 6.5.2. After training and being provided with relevant information, understand the effects of vibration on health and learn to recognise the symptoms associated with excessive hand-arm vibration exposure;
- 6.5.3 Inform their line manager, or Health and Safety Officer, of any health and safety concerns regarding their work activities or those of work colleagues;
- 6.5.4 Promptly inform their line manager, or Health and Safety Officer, of any symptoms or medical conditions suspected to be caused by vibration exposure so they may be referred to occupational health for assessment;
- 6.5.5 At the request of their line manager or directly via occupational health, complete any medical questionnaires relating to HAV and attend health surveillance appointments with Occupational Health during work hours;
- 6.5.6 Understand their responsibilities in relation to this policy and any supporting documentation;
- 6.5.7 Check tools prior to use to ensure eg; that cutting tools are sharp, equipment is appropriately maintained, lubricated where necessary, and that all necessary ergonomic or vibration reduction attachments are fitted and are correctly used;
- 6.5.8 Discontinue use of any vibrating hand tools that they have reason to believe requires maintenance or repair or has damage to attachments and features intended to reduce their exposure to harmful vibration levels.

6.6. The Health and Safety Division will:

- 6.6.1. Ensure the control of hand arm vibration at work policy is reviewed at least every 2 years to ensure it is in line with current legislation;
- 6.6.2. Provide advice and information on legislation or guidance relating to control of vibration at work;
- 6.6.3. Ensure that confirmed cases of carpal tunnel syndrome or HAVS arising from the use of vibrating hand tools, or handling of material being processed that transmits vibration, are reported appropriately in accordance with the Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations (RIDDOR) 1995;
- 6.6.4. Work with Occupational Health and Procurement to engage a contractor/consultant to assist the Authority in complying with the Control of Vibration Regulations.
- 6.6.5. Monitor implementation of this policy.

6.7. Procurement will:

- 6.7.1 Ensure the purchasing policy reflects the selection of appropriate equipment.
- 6.7.2 Arrange for suppliers to demonstrate and allow the Authority to trial any equipment, plant or machinery as part of the pre-selection and procurement process where appropriate;
- 6.7.3 Ensure a competent person (as defined in Section 4) is consulted regarding any issues relating to equipment, plant and machinery intended for use that will cause those using the equipment to be exposed to vibration;
- 6.7.4 Ensure any external occupational health service provider, if appointed to provide medical screening on behalf of the Authority, is suitably qualified in the screening and diagnosis of hand arm vibration exposure;

6.8. Occupational Health will:

- 6.8.1 Carry out initial screening for all employees identified as working with vibrating equipment.
- 6.8.2 Carry out annual screening for all employees identified as working with vibrating equipment.
- 6.8.3 Work with Procurement and the health and safety division to engage a contractor/consultant to assist the Authority in complying with the Control of Vibration Regulations.
- 6.8.4 Maintain health records of any employees relating to vibration. These records must be kept for at least forty years;
- 6.8.5 If requested provide the Authority with copies of health records and, on reasonable notice, allow an employee access to their personal health records;
- 6.8.6 Liaise with the health and safety division to ensure that confirmed cases of carpal tunnel syndrome or HAVS arising from the use of vibrating hand tools, or handling of material being processed that transmits vibration are reported appropriately in accordance with the Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations (RIDDOR) 1995.

6.9 Consultant/Contractor Occupational Health Provider engaged will:

- 6.9.1 Conduct any further enquiries and medical assessments deemed necessary by initial and annual screening with appropriate employees.
- 6.9.2 In the case of formal diagnosis of hand arm vibration ensure that the Authority's Occupational Health Department are informed and are provided with copies of all relevant health surveillance, forms and reports.

- 6.9.3 Where required, provide advice, information and support to employees, who have been exposed to vibration at work, and inform managers of significant findings of health surveillance;
- 6.9.4 Maintain health records of any employees relating to above. These records must be kept for at least forty years; ensure that these records are provided to the Authority's Occupational Health Department.
- 6.9.5 Inform the Authority's Occupational Health Department of any confirmed cases of carpel tunnel syndrome or HAVS arising from the use of vibrating hand tools, or handling of material being processed that transmits vibration to allow reporting under the RIDDOR Regulations.