

QBE HAVS Workshop – Scenario 1

SCENARIO

Within your factory, several spot welding machines have been used for the last 6 years. These machines require the operator to use the palm of the dominant hand, to push a component through the welding machine, during which, vibration is transmitted into the palm. Typically, this would be the only duty undertaken by those operators, throughout an 8 hour shift.

Following a complaint to the Safety Committee when one employee reported HAVS symptoms to his GP, a search of available data from the machinery manufacturers, various websites and engineering trade groups' literature, indicated a likely A(8) of 2.3 m/s².

No further symptoms have been reported by the complainant nor have any similar reports been made throughout the time that these machines have been in use.

For the purposes of this exercise, assume that the operation is business critical and that current technology does not offer an alternative means of undertaking the task at reduced A(8) exposures.

DISCUSSION POINTS

1. Very briefly outline what actions are required to comply with the Control of Vibration at Work Regulations 2005. Please note, this is NOT a test of in-depth knowledge. A brief outline only is required of the key requirements.

Outcomes:

Review existing systems, policies, tools, risk assessment, exposures.

- a. Reduce risk to lowest level-ALARP, if not possible to get below action level, review control systems.
- b. Measurements and review of reliability of readings.
- c. Training for operators. Why are some affected and not others.
- d. Occ. Health facilities, pre-employment questionnaire, surveillance, monitor ongoing exposures.
- e. Alternative tools, technology if elimination not possible.
- f. Job rotation as last resort.

2. Do you consider the above scenario presents a foreseeable risk of injury that is potentially compensatable and if so, outline what actions would be prudent to support a defence against such future claims?

Outcomes:

- a. 2.3m/s² is far greater than 1, below 1 unlikely to be risk of injury, greater than 1 foreseeable risk of injury. Therefore potentially compensatable.
- b. HR needs to liaise with H&S, Occ Health, Management, Unions to understand risks.
- c. Measurement over 8 years more reliable than 6.
- d. Good documentation to prove what was done.

3. Which departments or functions that will need to interact closely for this to be effective?

Outcomes:

- a. Internal - occupational health, human resources, manufacturing production and engineering, management, procurement.

- b. External - Insurance company, solicitors, engineers, HSE, contractors, customers, suppliers, unions.