

TBT0018	VIBRATION		
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Introduction
Vibration can cause serious and disabling injuries, but many operatives are unaware of the risks. Many tools can cause vibration including road breakers, chainsaws, concrete cutting saws, percussive hand tools, rotating hand tools, riveting guns, air driven breaking hammers etc.
Main Points
• Reduce the potential for vibration by careful selection of work equipment (i.e. 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.
Discussion Points
• Vibration can affect the whole body, but more commonly affects the hands and arms. • The first signs may simply be a tingling in the fingers, but can also result in fatigue, irritation and loss of concentration – thus increasing the general risks to safety at work. • Longer term effects can include damage to blood vessels, nerves, muscles, tendons and body organs, and potentially lead to “Vibration White Finger” (VWF). • Always wear adequate clothing to keep dry and maintain hand and body temperatures (cold is a contributory factor to VWF) – note that heavily padded gloves do not protect against vibration and can even increase vibration levels but ordinary gloves can keep the hands warm thus ensuring good blood flow to the fingers • Always let the work equipment do the work for you but ensure sufficient grip is maintained for safety. • DO NOT use blunt tools – keep tools sharp and use the right tool for the job. Always report defective equipment to your supervisor in order to obtain a replacement. • Massaging and exercising fingers during work breaks will help circulation. • Note that nicotine reduces the blood supply to hands and fingers, so if you are a smoker, you are at increased risk of VWF. PREVENTING EXPOSURE IS RELATIVELY EASY – CURING VIBRATION WHITE FINGER IS NOT!

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