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**HAND-ARM VIBRATION SAFETY POLICY**

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1.General Statement

In accordance with the provisions of the *Control of Vibration at Work Regs (NI) 2005*, the University is committed to ensuring that exposure of its employees and its students to hand-arm vibration at or above the daily exposure limit value (5 m/s2A(8)) is prevented by the implementation of a programme of organisational and technical measures.

2. Responsibility

2.1 Management Responsibility

Heads of School/Directors of Academic Support Units are responsible for putting the appropriate arrangements in place, within the areas under their direct control to ensure compliance with the provisions of this policy.

2.2 Employee/Student Responsibility

They must make full and proper use of all measures put in place by the School/Directorate to control and minimise the risk of exposure to hand-arm vibration. They should, in particular:

* use equipment in the manner prescribed
* follow agreed protocols/work method statements
* wear personal protection equipment (PPE) as instructed
* report promptly to their line management any defect or fault in equipment that could affect its vibration characteristics (for example, broken teeth on a hedge clipper.)

2.3 University Safety Service (USS) Responsibility

The USS has a responsibility to provide and maintain a service for the measurement of hand-arm vibration from hand power tools. It also has a responsibility to ensure that equipment used in such measurements is fully operational and in calibration. The USS has a responsibility to provide guidance on the selection of hand power tools and on control measures to prevent exposure to hand-arm vibration at or above the daily exposure limit value.

3. Provisions of this Policy

3.1 Selection of hand power tools

No hand power tool should be purchased, hired or brought onto and used on University premises unless:

* it has been designed and constructed to reduce the risk from vibration
* it is suitable for the work it is intended to do and for the conditions in which it will be used.

3.2 Use of Hand Power Tools

The power tool selected must be:

* properly maintained throughout its useful working life to sustain its best vibration performance
* used only by workers trained in its safe use
* used only for operations and in conditions for which it is suitable.

3.3 Risk Assessment

No work, which is liable to expose any employee and/or student to risk from hand-arm vibration, shall be carried out until a suitable and sufficient risk assessment has been made. The person(s) directly involved in the work and, so far as is reasonably practicable, employee safety representatives shall participate in the risk assessment process. The USS shall conduct vibration measurements, where it is deemed necessary.

3.4 Control Measures

Where it is not reasonably practicable to eliminate risk at source and an exposure action value is likely to be reached or exceeded, exposure shall be reduced to as low a level as is reasonably practicable by establishing and implementing a programme of organisational and technical measures which is appropriate to the activity. Typical control measures include:

* using other work methods which eliminate or reduce exposure to vibration
* choosing work equipment of appropriate ergonomic design which produces the least possible vibration
* the provision of auxiliary equipment which reduces the risk of injuries caused by vibration
* the introduction of appropriate maintenance programmes for the work equipment, the workplace and workplace systems
* the provision of information, instruction and training such that work equipment may be used correctly and safely, in order to minimise exposure to vibration
* the limitation of the duration and magnitude of exposure to vibration by introducing work schedules with adequate rest periods
* the provision of clothing to protect employees from cold and damp, if applicable.

3.5 Use of Control Measures

The workplace shall be inspected on a regular basis to ensure that the control measures recommended in the risk assessment are in place and are being properly used.

3.6 Maintenance of Work Equipment

All power tools must be inspected regularly for damage and maintained in accordance with the manufacturers’/suppliers’ instructions. This is to ensure that the equipment is maintained in its most efficient state and the best vibration performance is sustained during its operational lifetime.

3.7 Maintenance, Examination and Testing of Control Measures

Personal protective equipment (gloves, clothing etc) shall be examined at regular intervals to ensure that it remains fit for purpose.

3.8 Monitoring Exposure to Hand-Arm Vibration

As discussed previously in section 2.3 and 3.3, the USS will carry out the appropriate vibration measurements on request.

3.9 Health Surveillance

Health surveillance should be provided for vibration-exposed employees and students who:

* are likely to be regularly exposed above the action value of 2.5 m/s2 A(8);
* are likely to be exposed occasionally above the action value and where the risk assessment identifies that the frequency and severity of exposure may pose a risk to health; or
* have a diagnosis of hand-arm vibration syndrome (HAVS), even when exposed below the action value.

In such circumstances, the nature and frequency of health surveillance should be ascertained from the Occupational Health Physician and implemented as per instruction.

3.10 Information, Instruction and Training

All personnel involved in work with hand power tools and where the risk assessment indicates that there is a risk to health from exposure to vibration shall be provided with suitable and sufficient information, instruction and training. This information, instruction and training shall include:

* the risk from vibration
* the exposure limit and action values given in the *Control of Vibration at Work Regs (NI) 2005*
* how to detect and report signs of injury arising from exposure to vibration
* the significant findings of the risk assessment undertaken
* the appropriate protective measures to be taken to keep exposure to vibration as low as reasonably practicable
* safe working practices to minimise exposure to vibration
* the collective results from any health surveillance undertaken.

3.11 Record Keeping

Records shall be kept of the relevant risk assessments, inspection and maintenance of power tools, vibration monitoring of power tools, health surveillance and of instruction and training given in relation to work with power tools.

3.12 Monitoring/Audit

Compliance with the provisions of this policy shall be monitored by the School/Directorate annually or more frequently if circumstances warrant it. All of the appropriate records shall be made available on request for inspection by the audit team.

4. Further Guidance

*The Control of Vibration at Work Regs (NI) 2005: Statutory Rule 2005 No 397*

*Hand-Arm Vibration: Guidance on the Regulations: L140, HSE.*