

1. Introduction

This policy deals with how the Dacorum Borough Council (DBC) addresses the risk to employees from the exposure of whole body vibration at work as a result of using mobile machinery* or other vehicles over poor surfaces as a main part of their job.

Vehicles such as vans, lorries and buses, which are normally driven on well-maintained public roads, may also expose their drivers to some WBV, but the levels are likely to be relatively low and therefore the likelihood of related health risks is low.

**Mobile machinery is the term used by the HSE in L141*

2. Legal Duties – Control of Vibration at Work Regulations 2005

The Control of Vibration at Work Regulations 2005 (the Vibration Regulations) require employers to control the health risks to their employees from exposure to WBV.

“whole-body vibration” means mechanical vibration which is transmitted into the body, when seated or standing, through the supporting surface, during a work activity or as described in regulation 5(3)(f);

Regulation 4 of the Vibration Regulations defines the permitted exposure levels for whole body vibration -

- a) the daily exposure limit value is 1.15 m/s² A(8);
- b) the daily exposure action value is 0.5 m/s² A(8),

Regulation 5 of the Vibration Regulations requires DBC to assess the risk from vibration.

Regulation 6 requires the elimination, or control of exposure to vibration. Elimination is near impossible given the nature of the tasks undertaken by some of DBC's services especially grounds maintenance and grave digging.

“There are few examples of other methods of work that eliminate or reduce exposure to WBV. It is possible in some cases to minimise the transport of goods or materials or to replace manned with unmanned machines such as remotely controlled conveyors”.L141 Guidance on Regulations para 61. For example the ‘spider’ currently used by CSG.

Equipment purchased by DBC will consider where practicable mobile machinery with low whole body vibration values. As technology advances it may be that remote control grass cutters/diggers will be introduced to eliminate vibration to the operative.

Regulation 8 requires that employees are provided with information, instruction and training in relation to:

- the sources of vibration,
- the control measures the Council has implemented to eliminate or control vibration,
- the exposure values and exposure limits,

- Significant findings of the risk assessment.

All employees who are exposed to the risk of whole body vibration **must** attend the WBV Awareness Training course.

3. Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to assist DBC comply with the legislation and protect the health of employees. The control measures within the risk assessment, should include purchasing decisions, training and task rotation. All combine to reduce the level of whole body vibration exposure.

4. Scope

This policy applies to DBC staff, including agency, temporary workers, work experience, volunteers and those that may be employed via a Government Scheme that are likely to be exposed to whole body vibration.

5. How DBC Controls of the risk of Vibration

Risk assessment

Each service area **must** complete a Whole Body Vibration risk assessment based on the risk assessment accepted by the Health & Safety Executive (HSE) for Clean Safe and Green in March 2016 for hand arm vibration. (**Appendix I**)

This is in addition to the risk assessments for the use of a particular piece of mobile machinery.

Training and Qualifications

This risk assessment requires all mobile machinery (diggers, dumpers, ride-on mowers, tractors and the like) to be maintained and inspected in accordance with the manufacturers' guidelines. Only staff that have received specific training or hold specific licences for the mobile machinery must operate the machinery.

The Group Manager for the service is responsible for ensuring that staff obtain and retain the appropriate qualifications (training and/or licence) for operating mobile machinery such as dumpers, diggers, ride-on mowers, tractors and the like.

Staff **must** attend Whole Body Vibration Awareness Training.

Staff **must** be trained and deemed competent in the use of moveable machinery; this must be recorded as part of their probationary and on-going training records.

Staff **must** complete the Operators Daily Machine Checklist and detail any faults, and bring the faults to the attention of their supervisor/line manager.

Task rotation is an essential part in controlling the exposure of whole body vibration. Where mobile machinery has been assigned a time limit per day then

this must be obeyed. If work is to continue then a second operator must be used if the daily time period of use is to be exceeded. Employees that use moveable machinery **must** participate in task rotation when the action values have been exceeded.

Documentation to prove compliance with the policy and risk assessment must be held and available for audit by the service at all times.

Health Surveillance

Unlike Hand Arm Vibration (HAV) health surveillance for WBV is not appropriate since it fails to meet the criteria listed in regulation 7(2). It is not considered that any methods exist for the detection of changes in peoples' backs which can reliably indicate the early onset of changes (which may cause low back pain) that are specifically related to workplace factors.

Valuable information can, however, be obtained from less precise measures than those provided for by a formal health surveillance approach, such as reporting and monitoring of symptoms. This is generally known as 'health monitoring'. It is good practice to put in place this type of system to allow individuals to make early reports of low back pain in order to assess the need for action on WBV, manual handling or posture. However, it is not a legal requirement under these regulations

Staff should be directed to sources of information on whole body vibration (**see Appendix II**)

Pre-Employment

Prospective employees likely to be exposed to WBV (those that operate mobile machinery) are **required** to complete an electronic health screening questionnaire prior to starting employment. This process is managed by Human Resources. This to ensure that they are suitable for the role, that role does not exacerbate an existing condition and whether any reasonable adjustments need/or can be made.

Purchase and Replacement of machinery

No equipment should be purchased unless information relating to whole body vibration is provided. Only equipment that is CE marked will be purchased.

Appendix I

The Hand Arm Vibration risk assessment accepted by the HSE for Clean Safe and Green in March 2016.

<http://dennis/Docs/Documents/Forms/AllItems.aspx?RootFolder=%2FDocs%2FDocuments%2FCorporate%20Health%20and%20Safety%2FHand%20Arm%20Vibration&InitialTabId=Ribbon%2EDocument&VisibilityContext=WSSTabPersistence>

Appendix II : Additional Sources of information

Drive away bad backs: Advice for mobile machine operators and drivers

<http://www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/indg404.pdf>

Control back-pain risks from whole-body vibration: Advice for employers on the Control of Vibration at Work Regulations 2005

<http://www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/indg242.pdf>

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