



**Scottish
Ambulance
Service**
Taking Care to the Patient



HS 044 – CONTROL OF VIBRATION POLICY Version 1.00

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1 Introduction

1.1 Exposure to excessive Vibration can cause, Whole Body Vibration (WBV), Hand-Arm Vibration Syndrome (HAVS) or Carpal Tunnel Syndrome (CTS). Vibration can also cause significant ill health (painful and disabling disorders of the blood vessels, nerves and joints). Damage from HAVS can include the inability to do fine work and cold temperatures can trigger painful finger blanching attacks.

1.2 This policy is produced to put in place arrangements to effectively control work activities where vibration occurs, e.g. using vibrating equipment.

1.3 The Control of Vibration at Work Regulations 2005 requires employers to assess the risks associated with the use of vibrating equipment and power tools such drills, grinders, saws and breakers. The employer has a general duty under Section 2(1) of the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974 to ensure so far as is reasonably practicable the health, safety and welfare at work of employees. The risk assessment needs to consider options to eliminate or control a hazard in order to decrease the degree of risk to as low as is reasonably practicable.

2 Scope

2.1 This policy includes all workers, whether they are working or acting directly or indirectly for or on behalf of the Service. For convenience this policy will refer to all these groups as staff. Because individuals are affected by vibration differently, it is difficult to specify what level of vibration is absolutely safe.

3 Aims

3.1 The aim of this policy is to ensure Managers and employees are aware of the legal requirements regarding controlling vibration at work and to provide practical guidance on risk assessment and controls associated with vibration and risk reduction.

4 Definitions

4.1 EXPOSURE ACTION VALUE (EAV): the daily exposure action value is 2.5m/s^2 A(8). The A(8) signifies that the EAV is not just a number or value but exposure to that vibration number or value over a specific period of time, ie, 8 hours. The EAV can therefore be seen as a vibration dose of 2.5m/s^2 for 8 hours, or equivalent.

4.2 EXPOSURE LIMIT VALUE (ELV): the daily exposure action value is 5m/s^2 A(8). The A(8) signifies that the ELV is not just a number or value but exposure to that vibration number or value over a specific period of time, ie, 8 hours. The ELV can therefore be seen as a vibration dose of 5m/s^2 for 8 hours, or equivalent.

4.3 M/S^2 : Magnitude squared

4.4 WBV – Whole Body Vibration

4.5 HAV – Hand Arm Vibration

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5 Duties (Roles and Responsibilities)

5.1 Scottish Ambulance Service

The Service overall responsibility is to provide a safe working environment for all its employees, patients and visitors. The Service is ultimately responsible for fulfilling all Health and Safety duties as an employer, including all statute Health and Safety Law requirements.

5.2 Chief Executive

The Chief Executive has overall responsibility within the Service for ensuring that appropriate and effective health and safety management systems are in place including the management of vibration at work.

5.3 Director of Human Resources and Organisational Development

5.3.1 Has designated authority for the implementation of all Health and Safety policies within the organisation.

5.3.2 Director of Human Resources and Organisational Development is responsible for:

- i) Ensuring that Health and Safety issues are appropriately considered for all board decisions.
- ii) Ensuring that Health and Safety is appropriately resourced.
- iii) Ensuring that competent Health and Safety advice is available.
- iv) Ensures that there is a common specification for the provision of Occupational Health services, with common protocols and procedures governing access and referral to these services.

5.4 Executive Directors/Regional and National Directors

5.4.1 Are responsible for ensuring that day to day activities of their Directorate are conducted in a safe and suitable manner and this policy is effectively and correctly employed within their own Directorate.

5.4.2 They have the ultimate responsibility for all health and safety issues within their Directorate. They must ensure that there is a sound local health and safety function as well as develop health and safety awareness and culture within their remit including the provision of appropriate management of Vibration.

5.5 Heads of Department/Head of Service and Senior Managers

- i) Should ensure that risk assessments are in place to protect at risk employees.
- ii) Are responsible for carrying out actions and assessing the outcomes of risk assessments including training, cost and maintenance where necessary to improve the protection of staff. This should be included as part of the Directorate budget setting when compiling budget plans for approval.

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- iii) Risk assessments should be reviewed on an annual basis or as a result in changes to working practices, changes in staff, departmental changes or other arrangements.
- iv) May need to engage with an Occupational Hygienist where assessments are unable to be completed by the Health and Safety Officers, however this may have to be outsourced to a third party.

5.6 General Manager Fleet

5.6.1 Has a duty to ensure that control measures are provided for vibration reduction and that these controls are maintained, tested and inspected in accordance with the relevant British or European Standard.

5.6.2 General Manager Fleet will ensure that any Service plant with control measures that comes under the control of the Fleet Department are tested and maintained in accordance with the relevant planned preventative maintenance schedule.

5.6.3 General Manager Fleet will also ensure that all new equipment and machinery purchased shall require a check for vibration levels (information from the supplier) and be considered within the procurement decision.

5.6.4 The General Manager Fleet will be responsible for ensuring appropriate training is offered to all staff, likely to be affected by vibrating equipment.

5.6.5 And in conjunction with the Vehicle Design and Equipment Group will be responsible for:

5.6.6 Choosing work equipment/vehicles of appropriate ergonomic design, i.e. the choice of vehicles can be an important means of reducing exposure to whole body vibration (WBV) through:

- i) The difference in vibration emissions of the vehicle itself (although this needs to be considered alongside choosing the most appropriate vehicles for the task);
- ii) Visibility should be such that the vehicle can be operated without stretching and twisting;
- iii) It should be easy to get in and out of the vehicle by using handholds and footholds where appropriate so that the temptation to climb or jump is minimised;
- iv) Considering the choice of seats (including suspension seating) and the choice of tyre, and
- v) Regular maintenance of vehicles (including their seats and suspension).

5.7 Occupational Health Service

5.7.1 Occupational Health Service will be responsible for undertaking the health surveillance required by the Control of Vibration at Work Regulations 2005. Staff members highlighted to the Occupational Health Service who have or are likely to be affected by harmful vibration in their work areas should undergo a baseline assessment prior to starting work. Advice from the service Occupational Health provider will be considered when making offers of employment and where

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appropriate, all practical adjustments will be made to accommodate any restrictions identified.

5.7.2 Control of vibration at work regulations 2005, "Health surveillance programmes need to include assessments for any new or existing employees before they begin exposure to vibration".

5.8 Health and Safety Department

5.8.1 Health and Safety Department will provide advice and guidance to managers and employees on legislative requirements and industry standards regarding vibration at work.

5.8.2 The Health and Safety Department will undertake vibration risk assessments and identify control measures necessary reduce vibration exposure to staff.

5.8.3 The Health and Safety Department will also be responsible for the identification of training needs for employees working vibrating tools or equipment. The Health and Safety Department will provide advice and guidance as regards control measures identified by risk assessments.

5.9 All Employees

5.9.1 All employees are expected to take reasonable care to ensure the safety of themselves, their colleagues, patients and the public. All employees must comply with legislation, Service policies and procedures and anything else provided for their own protection and protection of others.

5.9.2. All staff :

- i) Must attend all training identified as necessary through the service or by their manager through the risk assessment process or a training needs analysis.
- ii) should accurately record daily point's usage of any equipment that exposes them to Hand Arm Vibration in accordance with the HAV's guidance.
- iii) Read, understand and adhere to any safe systems of work
- iv) Bring to the attention of their line managers, any deficiencies and/or problems in relation to adhering to, or the implementation of, such safe systems of work;
- v) Bring to the attention of their managers any signs or symptoms of HAVS/WBV that they think they have developed; and
- vi) When requested, attend appointments at Occupational Health for Assessment and health surveillance
- vii) Check the equipment being used regularly prior to and during use;
- viii) Comply with manufacturer's guidance in relation to each piece of equipment;
- ix) Be familiar with this guidance and procedure and ensure that the points system is understood and adhered to;

5.9.3 In the event of uncertainty employees should seek advice from their line managers or the Health and Safety Team.

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6 Legislative Requirements

6.1 The Control of Vibration at Work Regulations 2005 requires employers to prevent or reduce risks to health and safety from exposure to vibration at work.

6.2 The Regulations require the Service as an employer to:

- i) Assess the risks to its employees from vibration at work
- ii) Take action to reduce the vibration exposure that produces those risks
- iii) The Service must ensure that the legal limits on vibration exposure are not exceeded
- iv) The Service must provide its employees sufficient information, instruction and training about vibration at work
- v) The Service must also carry out health surveillance where there is a risk to the health of its staff

7 Risk Assessment

7.1 Any work equipment which is suspected of exposing staff to vibration will be subject to a formal assessment using the risk assessment form contained within the guidance to accompany this policy and be carried out by a competent person.

7.2 All new equipment and machinery purchased shall require a check on vibration (information from the supplier) and be included within the procurement decision.

8 Elimination or Control of Vibration in the workplace

8.1 The Service shall ensure that the risk of exposure to vibration at work is eliminated, tackled at source or reduced to as low a level as is reasonably practicable.

9 Training

9.1 All staff exposed to levels at or above the Exposure Action Value (EAV) must undergo Hand Arm Vibration (HAV) training. Regulation 8 also includes provision of training where risk assessment indicates risk to health; this may be at levels below the EAV. Training will be facilitated by the health and safety team based on the findings of the risk assessment once notified by the responsible manager.

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