APPENDIX 1

Vibration at Work Policy

Corporate Health and Safety Team

February 2026

Version	Author	Date
1	Corporate Health and Safety team	February 2026

Document History

Name of Policy	H&SP12 – Vibration at Work Policy
Purpose of Policy	New Forest District Council (NFDC) aims to minimise the incidence of workplace risk by providing and maintaining a safe and healthy workplace. Prolonged exposure to vibration can cause debilitating conditions to the body, arms, hands and fingers of the operator, which is often permanent. Damage caused by working with vibrating tools, equipment and machinery is preventable. To comply with legislation, NFDC will implement risk assessments for work activities to identify tasks exposing operators to vibration and make suitable and sufficient arrangements to minimise or eliminate the risks of vibration to employees at work.
Policy Applies to	This policy and subsequent arrangements apply to all New Forest District Council employees, contractors, agency workers and members of public.
Update Frequency	Every 2 years or sooner if required due to organisational or regulatory changes.
Latest Update	June 2018
Update Overview	First issue February 2005 **February 2026** Complete update of policy document to include roles and responsibilities, guidance and appendices.

Contents

1. Introduction

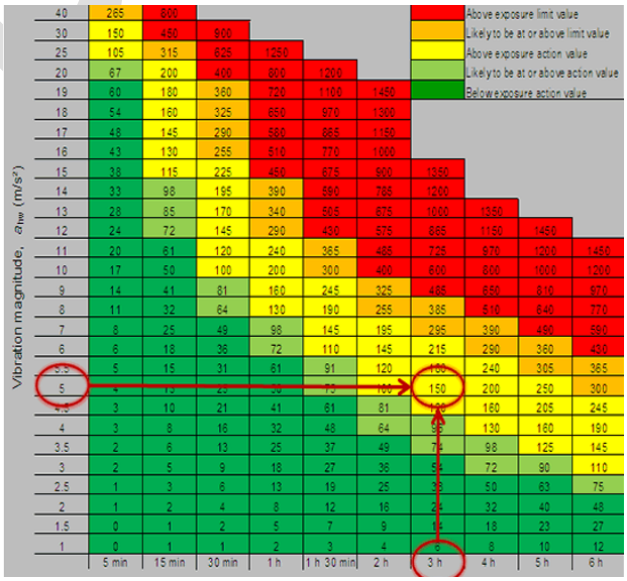
Employers have a legal duty to assess the risk of vibration exposure to their employees and to identify individuals who may be exposed above the action and limit values specified in the relevant vibration regulations. To ensure compliance with these legal obligations and to safeguard the health, safety, and welfare of its workforce, the Council has endorsed this policy through its Executive Management Team. This document outlines the arrangements for managing the risks associated with vibration exposure in the workplace.

1.2. Scope

This policy applies to all employees of New Forest District Council (NFDC) and those individuals' undertaking works on behalf of NFDC, including agency and voluntary staff) and individuals who are affected by their acts or omissions.

1.2. Policy Approach

This policy uses the Exposure Points Ready Reckoner to illustrate how daily vibration dose is calculated by combining the vibration magnitude of a tool with the duration of use. The diagram highlights when a worker's exposure reaches the Exposure Action Value (EAV) or the Exposure Limit Value (ELV), helping the organisation identify when controls are required or when tool use must be restricted. It provides a clear visual guide for assessing risk, planning work safely, and ensuring compliance with the Control of Vibration at Work Regulations.



2. Legislative and Regulatory Context

1.1 The Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974

The Health and Safety at Work etc Act 1974 is the primary piece of legislation covering occupational health and safety in Great Britain. This piece of legislation sets out the general duties which employers have towards employees and members of the public, employees have to themselves and to each other and certain self-employed have towards themselves and others. New Forest District Council acknowledges and accepts its responsibilities under The Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974 and will ensure to control all risks to its employees, contractors and those who may be affected by its arrangements are controlled as low as is reasonably practicable.

1.2 Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999

The Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999 is a piece of legislation covering the management of occupational health and safety in the workplace in Great Britain. This piece of legislation sets out the general duties which employers have relating to the expectations to risk assess, implement arrangements for planning, control, monitoring, and use of preventative and protective measures, provide instruction and training and consultation. NFDC acknowledges and accepts its responsibilities under the Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999 and will ensure to implement all the necessary controls and management methods to minimise the risks to its employees.

1.3 Control of Vibration at Work Regulations 2005

The Control of Vibration at Work Regulations 2005, (the Vibration Regulations), came into force on 6th July 2005 and aim to protect workers from the risks to health from vibration.

These regulation place specific duties on employers to assess risks, control vibration exposure, and provide health surveillance to employees.

3. Definitions

Term	Definition
Exposure action level (EAV)	The daily amount of vibration exposure above which employers are required to take action to control exposure. 2.5 m/s² A(8)
Exposure limit value (ELV)	The maximum amount of vibration an employee may be exposed to on any single day. 5.0 m/s² A(8)
HAVS	Abbreviation of hand-arm vibration syndrome. A medical condition caused by prolonged exposure to vibration.
WBV	Abbreviation of whole-body vibration. Vibration transmitted through the body.
Trigger time	The actual duration during which a worker is exposed to vibration from a tool or equipment, specifically, the time when the equipment is switched on and actively vibrating while being held or operated by the worker.
Suitable and sufficient	Suitable for the level of risk and complexities for the task/project.
Competent person	Someone who has sufficient training, experience, knowledge, and skill for the task

4. Roles and Responsibilities

4.1 Service/Senior Managers Must:

- Understand the scope and content of the Vibration Regulations where this is relevant to work in their area.
- Provide adequate resources to ensure suitable and sufficient control measures can be implemented within their service area.
- Ensure vibration factors are considered when hiring or purchasing new equipment.

4.2 Supervisors/Line Managers Must:

- Understand the scope and content of the vibration regulations where this is relevant to work in their area.
- Ensure vibration factors are considered when hiring or purchasing new equipment.
- Ensure that necessary vibration risk assessments have been undertaken for any equipment used by those in their charge.
- Ensure that individuals identified as being exposed to levels of vibration that are likely to exceed the EAV are identified to Occupational Health so that health surveillance can be carried out, if required.
- Implement and enforce vibration control measures.
- Ensure that new employees who are likely to be regularly exposed to levels of vibration at or above the EAV complete the initial health questionnaire before employment begins.
- Ensure employees are suitably trained in all aspects of operating equipment, including vibration control.

4.3 Employees Must:

- Use all equipment provided in accordance with instruction and training received.
- Ensure any operator maintenance required is carried out.
- Visually check equipment prior to use (including ensuring that all vibration dampening attachments are correctly fitted) and report any identified fault or defect with equipment immediately ensuring equipment is tagged so that it cannot be used by anybody else.
- Report any symptoms of HAVS promptly to line manager or supervisor.
- Ensure completion of any training identified on the relevant service training matrix.
- Cooperate with any programme of health surveillance and training which is identified as necessary following risk assessment.

4.4 Corporate H&S Team Must:

- Provide competent advice and guidance to all services
- Assist managers/supervisors in carrying out vibration risk assessments if required.
- Advise on arranging vibration measurement where appropriate.
- Advise on the appropriate vibration control measures.
- Audit compliance with this policy and the underpinning regulations.

4.6 HR Recruitment Team Must:

- Liaise with managers/supervisors and the Council's Occupational Health Service to arrange appropriate health surveillance appointments and questionnaires as required.
- Maintain the health surveillance database and arrange new appointments/ongoing assessments for employees when necessary.

4.5 Occupational Health Must:

- Provide health surveillance on request.
- Give feedback and guidance on risk to individuals following health surveillance.
- Feedback results from health surveillance to the appropriate manager.
- Advise the appropriate manager if there are restrictions on an individual's ability to work due to health risks.

5. Exposure Limits and Impact to Health

5.1. Exposure Limits and Action Values

The regulations introduce action and limit values for both hand-arm vibration (HAV) and whole-body vibration (WBV).

Exposure Action Value (EAV)

This value triggers the need for employers to implement measures to control vibration exposure. The EAV is 2.5m/s^2 A(8).

Exposure Limit Value (ELV)

This value MUST NOT be exceeded by an individual on a single day.

The ELV is 5m/s^2 A(8).

5.2. Effects of Vibration Injuries

Employees whose hands are regularly exposed to vibration may suffer from symptoms due to pathological effects on the muscles, circulatory and nervous system, and other tissues of the hand and arm. Where they affect the hands or arms, the symptoms are collectively known as hand-arm vibration syndrome (HAVS).

HAVS symptoms may include the following components:

- **Neurological symptoms** - include numbness and tingling in the fingers, and a reduced sense of touch and temperature. This nerve damage can be disabling, making it difficult to feel, and to work with, small objects.
- **Vascular component** - Episodic finger blanching is the characteristic vascular sign. This is sometimes known as 'vibration white finger', 'dead finger' or 'dead hand'. The main trigger for the symptoms is exposure to the cold, for example being outdoors early on a winter's morning. The symptoms can also be triggered by localised or general body cooling in otherwise warm environments. Although vibration causes the condition, it does not precipitate the symptoms.

- **Muscular and soft tissue** - Employees may complain of joint pain and stiffness in the hand and arm. Grip strength can be reduced due to nerve and muscle damage. An individual employee suffering from HAVS may not experience the complete range of symptoms, for example symptoms related to the neurological component can be present in the absence of vascular problems and vice versa. Neurological symptoms generally appear earlier than finger blanching. Carpal tunnel syndrome, a disorder of the hand and arm giving rise to tingling, numbness, weakness, pain and night waking, can be caused by exposure to vibration. The symptoms of HAVS are usually progressive with continuing exposure to vibration. There will be individual variation in the timing and rate of deterioration. The degree to which symptoms regress on removal from exposure to vibration is not known with any certainty and the condition may be irreversible. Exposure to whole body vibration (WBV) at low levels may aggravate existing back pain or other conditions whilst higher levels may cause symptoms to develop

6. Procedures

6.1 Risk Assessment

All Line Managers and Supervisors are responsible for ensuring suitable and sufficient risk assessments are in place which consider the risks associated with vibration at work.

The purpose of risk assessment is to enable managers/supervisors to make a valid decision about the measures necessary to prevent or adequately control the exposure of employees to HAV or WBV. It also enables managers/supervisors to demonstrate readily to others who may have an interest, e.g. employees, safety representatives and enforcement authorities that they have from the earliest opportunity considered the risks from vibration.

When conducting the assessment the following steps should be followed:

- Identify all existing powered tools, equipment and machinery which potentially pose a risk of hand arm vibration or whole-body vibration.
- Review and observe the conditions under which such powered tools, equipment and machinery are used to obtain a true and representative appreciation of the nature of the work.
- Identify the maximum duration of their use (‘trigger time’ for HAVS or work time for WBV) in any working day, if necessary, by keeping a log or using monitoring devices.
- Assess the vibration magnitude from each piece of equipment used. **

*** This information must be provided by the manufacturer; however, manufacturers’ data will often come from testing under specific controlled conditions which are very different from normal working practices and therefore may significantly underestimate exposures in practice. Additional information from on-site measurement or from databases of vibration levels may be required.*

- Consider individual factors such as pre-existing health conditions that may increase risk from vibration exposure for individual employees.
- Ensure that employees use equipment correctly. Poor posture, technique etc. may increase vibration exposure from a particular activity by up to 50%.
- The risk assessment should identify the maximum trigger time, or usage time permissible for the equipment to ensure that exposure does not exceed the ELV.
- The risk assessment should detail the measures in place to reduce the risk from vibration exposure and where applicable may include an action plan indicating any further measures planned.
- The vibration risk assessment can be a standalone document or can be incorporated into a task specific risk assessment document.
- The risk assessment should be reviewed whenever there is a change in vibration exposure or otherwise at least every 2 years.

6.2 Reducing Vibration Exposure

Measures should be put in place to reduce vibration exposure to as low a level as is reasonably practicable – even if vibration levels are below the Exposure Action Value (EAV), consideration should be given as to whether further reduction is practical.

Where vibration levels may exceed the EAV further risk assessment is required with the aim to reduce the level of vibration exposure.

Personal vibration exposure MUST NOT exceed the Exposure Limit Value (ELV) of 5m/s2.

Measures to reduce risks from vibration exposure may include replacing tools and equipment with alternatives which produce lower magnitudes of vibration.

Purchasing & Hiring Equipment

When purchasing or hiring equipment, suppliers must provide information about the vibration magnitudes their products are likely to create in normal use. This is a requirement of the Supply of Machinery (Safety) Regulations 2008.

Work equipment and tools are likely to be replaced over time as they become worn out, and it is important that replacements are chosen, so far as is reasonably practicable, which are suitable for the work, efficient and of lower vibration.

- Discuss your requirements with a range of suppliers
- Check with suppliers that their equipment is suitable and will be effective for the work, compare vibration emission information for different brands/models of equipment, ask for vibration information for the way you plan to use the equipment, and ask for information regarding any training requirements for safe operation
- Get operatives to try the different models and brands of equipment and take account of their opinions before you decide which to buy
- Find out the equipment vibration reduction features and how to use and maintain equipment to make these features effective
- Make sure there is a suitable purchasing policy in place, taking account of vibration emission, efficiency and any specific requirements you may have

- Training any employee responsible for purchasing equipment on the issues relating to vibration so that they can deal effectively with equipment suppliers

When planning purchasing of equipment consideration must be given to other methods of work which can eliminate or reduce exposure to vibration. This can include automation or mechanisation of work previously done with hand-operated or hand-fed machines.

Work Practices

It is important to ensure that work activities are designed to consider ergonomic principles, and to:

- Encourage good posture and working techniques.
- Ensure correct selection of the most appropriate tools for the task.
- Ensure that all equipment is properly maintained.
- Minimise time exposed to vibration e.g. regular breaks, job rotation.
- Provide suitable clothing to protect employees from cold and damp.
- Provide suitable training and information for all those exposed to vibration.

Maintenance of Equipment

To minimise the deterioration of equipment, items should be inspected and serviced on a regular basis. Advice from the suppliers/ manufacturers should be considered.

There may be certain routine checks or preventative replacement of parts required, in which case these should be carried out at a set frequency.

Individual users must carry out visual checks of the equipment prior to use and be made aware that if at any point they feel a machine performance has deteriorated in terms of vibration, they must report it at the earliest opportunity so that further investigations can be made.

An up-to-date inventory of all equipment must be kept, including date of purchase, maintenance information and vibration emission data.

Trigger time monitoring

To assess daily vibration exposure, we need to know the total daily duration of exposure to vibration from each piece of equipment or tool used.

This figure needs to be the time that the employee is exposed to vibration only, a period where the employee has put down the equipment or tool or is holding but not operating it should not be counted.

The contact time or 'trigger time' is the time that the hands are exposed to the vibration from the tool or workpiece. The trigger time is often very much shorter than the overall "time on the job" and is usually over-estimated by employees themselves.
Vibration trigger time monitors can be used to assist with trigger time monitoring by being attached to vibrating tools and loaded with the vibration magnitude of that tool.
When the tool is in use and vibrating (trigger time) the vibration monitor will record the amount of time that the tool is in use.

Exposure Points System and Ready reckoner

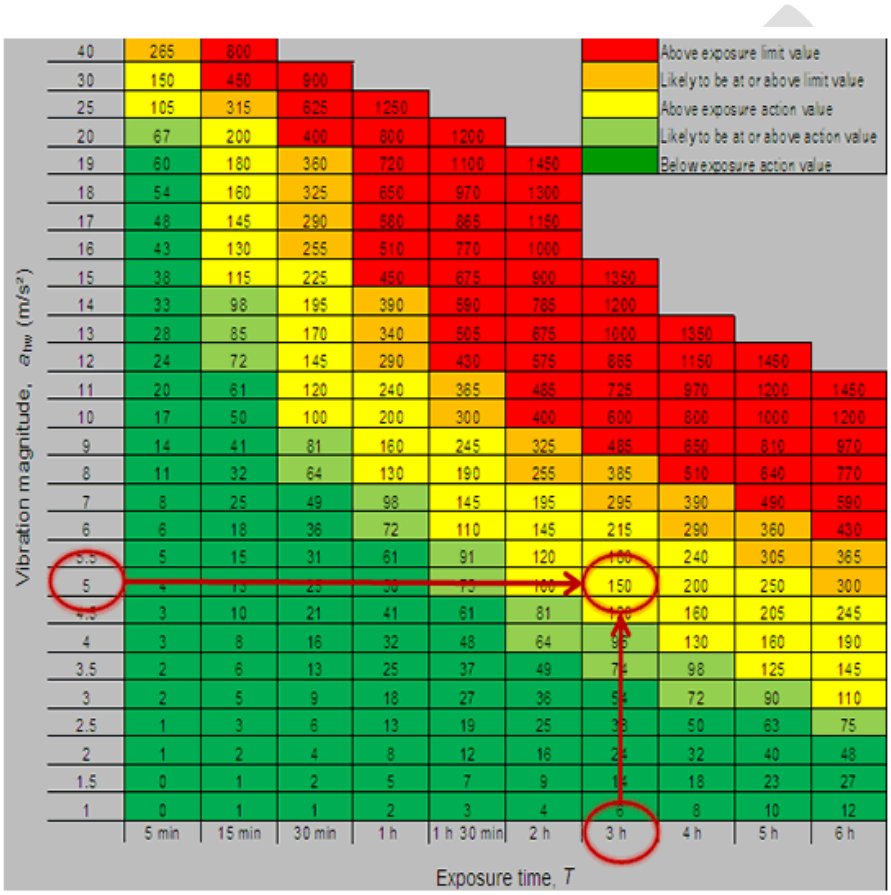
Daily vibration exposures can also be calculated using the exposure point system and the ready reckoner (fig 1.0).

The ready reckoner covers a range of vibration magnitudes up to 40 m/s^2 and a range of exposure times up to 10 hours.

The exposures for different combinations of vibration magnitude and exposure time are given in exposure points instead of values in m/s^2 A(8) and therefore can be easier to work with.

Fig 1.0 Exposure Points Ready Reckoner

- Exposure points change simply with time: twice the exposure time, twice the number of points
- Exposure points can be added together, for example where an operative is exposed to two or more different source of vibration in a day
- Exposure Action Value (2.5m/s^2 A(8)) is equal to **100 points**
- Exposure Limit Value (5 m/s^2 A(8)) is equal to **400 points**



6.3 Health Surveillance

Health surveillance is carried out by the Occupational Health Service provider and is mandatory for employees who are regularly exposed to vibration above the Exposure Action Value (EAV=2.5. m/s2).

Health surveillance is also offered to those exposed below the EAV if they are at increased risk e.g. if they report a pre-existing diagnosis of HAVS or any other condition of the hands, arms, wrists or shoulders, or any condition which affects circulation or nerve conduction such as diabetes, carpal tunnel syndrome etc.

Health surveillance will involve:

- As part of the recruitment process, identify the requirement for health surveillance.
- Undertake an initial assessment prior to commencement of employment, this will usually be by questionnaire, with face to face assessment follow up if required.
- An annual assessment questionnaire sent out to certain individuals by Occupational Health
- Face to face review - This will be arranged if the questionnaire reveals symptoms or if an individual reports symptoms between health surveillance questionnaires, or every 3 years otherwise.

All individual records are held confidentially as medical records and, where appropriate, summary results for groups of employees will be reported back to a manager to indicate the effectiveness of vibration control.

Specific recommendations may be made to a manager where an individual employee requires alteration to their duties to protect against HAVS.

6.5 Information, Instruction and Training

Training may be provided by a competent person. Alternatively, training may be computer based or through the distribution of written information.

Where new staff are employed and are likely to be exposed to vibration levels in excess of the EAV, they should be made aware of the risks of vibration prior to commencing work. This can be done at the same time as asking them to complete the initial health assessment form for return to Occupational Health.

In addition to these measures, all employees should be given appropriate training in the use of equipment.

This should include periodic supervised practice to identify work practices which may increase risk such as poor postures, gripping equipment too tightly etc.

Training should include information on the following matters:

- The items of work equipment that pose vibration risks and their respective levels of risk.
- How their personal daily exposures compare with the Exposure Action and Limit values (EAV and ELV).
- What symptoms of ill health they should look out for, to whom they should report them and how they should report them.
- What control measures are in place to minimise risks.
- What personal protective equipment is provided and when this should be used, e.g. the need to keep warm.
- The role of operators, supervisors and managers to ensure control of exposure, e.g. through correct selection, use and maintenance of equipment or restriction of exposure times.
- The health surveillance that is provided, how it will be carried out it and why it is important.

7. Relevant Legislation, Guidance and Links

- **L140 – The Control of Vibration at Work Regulations 2005**
- **The Control of Vibration at Work Regulations 2005**
- **HSE Webpages – control of vibration at work regulations 2005**
- **Indg175 – A brief guide to hand-arm vibration at work (employers)**
- **Indg296 – A guide for employees – hand-arm vibration**
- **The hand-arm vibration exposure calculator**
- **Corporate Health and Safety SharePoint Intranet pages**
- **Corporate Health and Safety – Risk Assessment SharePoint Intranet pages**