



Wilkins Safety Group

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Welcome to our latest Update E-Newsletter

As ever, please feel free to share this with friends and colleagues. You will also find PDF versions of all our other newsletters on our website: www.wilkinssafety.co.uk with lots more useful information and a wealth of leaflets covering Health and Safety topics.



Think Health as much as Safety.

This week I thought we should look at the Health side of Health & Safety.

Generally the accident rate at work is falling and industry should be applauded for that. But all too often we find that workers forget about or ignore the health aspects of work only to find that they spend their later years in poor health. All of which could have been avoided had they taken simple precautions when they were at work.

So the main article this week is asking you to "Think Health as much as Safety"

This week's 2 recent HSE cases also look at accidents that could and should have been avoided.

- **David Windsor**, 62, of St George, Bristol, suffered life changing injuries, including severe brain injury, in the incident at a building site at Mount Wise, Devonport, on 7 October 2010
- **The 46-year-old employee**, from Hexham, was seriously injured when a metal bolt weighing 7kg ejected from the back of the gun and into his left leg.

We hope you learn from the mistakes of others that are highlighted in our weekly newsletters and, as a result, do not have similar accidents at your workplace.

As ever, if you have a subject that you would like us to cover one week, please contact us by phone [01458 253682](tel:01458253682)
Email info@wilkinssafety.co.uk or via our [Facebook page](#) or by [Twitter](#)

Think Health as much as Safety

As we stated earlier, generally the accident rate at work is falling and industry should be applauded for that. But all too often we find that workers forget about or ignore the health aspects of work only to find that they spend their later years in poor health. Let's take a look at some of the main health problems and what we can do to avoid them.

What Health Threats Should You Look Out For?

Dust

Many of the health threats are fairly obvious such as dust. But some dusts are more dangerous than others:

Silica Dust Clouds

The extremely common natural substance Silica is found in stone of all sorts on work sites. It's released into the air during processes like grinding, sawing, demolition, power cutting, dumping, loading and plenty more.

When Silica is breathed in a lot over time, it causes all kinds of nasty conditions, from silicosis to lung cancer.

I was recently visiting a site and saw a young man cutting stone with a power saw, not wearing a face mask and breathing in the silica dust. When I stopped him, I heard his foreman laugh and say **"I've got a mask here in the van, we'll just rub it in the dust and that will keep him (meaning me) happy"** I told the man cutting the stone about the risks to his health and he got himself a mask. Whether he wore it after I left I don't know - I just hope so.



Bad Manual Handling

Health and social care more than any other industry, has workers taken out by musculoskeletal problems developed over time.

More than one third of all reportable 'Over Three Day' injuries and nearly 10% of 'Major Injuries' are associated with manual handling. Many injuries are cumulative, resulting from repeated exposure to manual handling operations. Sprains and strains arise from the incorrect application and/or prolongation of bodily force. Poor posture and excessive repetition of movement can be important factors in onset of injuries.



When bending, lifting, twisting, carrying, and dozens of small movements with heavy or even light loads are carried out repetitively over time, one day it takes its toll!



So what should you do?

1. Avoiding hazardous Manual Handling

Ask yourself can the movement etc. of loads be eliminated altogether? If the answer is no then ask can the operations be automated or mechanised?

2. Assessing hazardous Manual Handling

Where a possibility of injury from manual handling is indicated, a more specific assessment should be carried out. This is distinct from the everyday judgements which supervisors and others will have to make dealing with Manual handling. It needs to be broad in approach, identify measures to deal with problems likely to arise and include training provisions. Industry specific data and assessments might prove useful sources of information. The assessment should be recorded and kept readily accessible as long as it remains relevant. It should be noted that assessment is not an end in itself, merely a structured way of analysing risks and pointing the way to practical solutions.

Too Much Noise and Vibration

What is the problem with noise?

Noise is part of everyday life, but too much noise can cause permanent and disabling hearing damage. This can be hearing loss that gets worse over time, damage caused by sudden, extremely loud noises, or tinnitus (permanent ringing in the ears).

With hearing damage, conversation becomes difficult or impossible, your family complains about the television being too loud, you have trouble using the telephone, and you may be unable to sleep. By the time you notice, it is probably too late.



However, there is no need for your hearing to be damaged by your work – your employer has a duty to protect you and should be working on measures to reduce the risk. You can play a part in helping your employer to protect you.

Is there a noise problem where I work?

If any of the following apply, your employer would be expected to be doing something about noise:

- the noise is intrusive – like a busy street, a vacuum cleaner or a crowded restaurant – or worse, for most of the working day;
- you have to raise your voice to have a normal conversation when about 2 m apart, for at least part of the day;
- you use noisy powered tools or machinery for over half an hour a day;
- the type of work is known to have noisy tasks, e.g. construction, demolition or road repair; woodworking; plastics processing; engineering; textile manufacture; general fabrication; forging or stamping; paper or board making; canning or bottling; foundries; waste and recycling;
- there are noises because of impacts (such as hammering, drop forging, pneumatic impact tools etc.), explosive sources such as cartridge-operated tools or detonators, or guns.

Another sign that something should be done about the noise is having muffled hearing at the end of the day, even if it is better by the next morning. If you have any ear or hearing trouble, let your employer know.

Feeling those bad vibrations?

Two million people in the UK are at risk of developing hand-arm syndrome (HAVS) or carpal tunnel syndrome from using power tools like sanders, hammer drills, grinders and dozens more.

At a glance it may seem vibrations from power tools are a minor concern, but too much and you can develop serious and debilitating conditions – **like hand-arm Vibration syndrome (HAVS) or carpal tunnel syndrome.**



Their more unpleasant nicknames illustrate better how bad these injuries are – ‘vibration white finger’ or ‘dead finger’. Yep, ‘dead finger’ doesn’t sound too minor does it?

HAVS causes pain and distress, reduced ability to work in damp or cold conditions, or to do any fine work with the fingers, and loss of strength in the hands – all pretty much what

a good builder needs for their livelihood!

So what’s the threat and how can you avoid it?

6 Signs Your Workers are at Risk of HAVS

- 1) They work in construction – that’s right, everyone in construction is at risk of HAVS, it’s the most common industry for the problem
- 2) Your employees complain about numbness or tingling in their hands and fingers when they’ve been using vibrating tools
- 3) They hold work pieces that vibrate because they are being processed by pedestal grinders or other power machinery
- 4) They operate any hammer action tool for more than 15 minutes a day
- 5) They use rotary or other action tools for over 1 hour a day
- 6) They regularly use hand-held or guided power tools like Sanders, grinders, disc cutters, Hammer drill etc.

So you can see how the HSE can say 2 million people in the UK are at risk of getting HAVS – but before you panic, that's 2 million at risk! You can take these steps to dramatically reduce that risk. Pay careful attention to any signs of HAVS symptoms;

4 Early Symptoms of HAVS

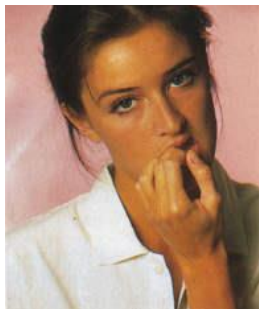
1. Numbness or tingling in fingers
2. Reduced sense of touch
3. Hands losing strength
4. Whiteness in your fingers, and then redness and pain

But you should be taking action a long time before you see symptoms. They can show up after months or years of exposure. A little too late. Instead, take these precautions and make sure all your workers know them well and follow them;

7 Ways to Reduce the Risk of HAVS

1. Reduce the time you use a tool in one go – vary, alternate and break up jobs
2. Use low-vibration tools wherever it's possible
3. Maintain and check tools – when they're not taken care of properly wear, tear and faults can cause extra vibrations
4. Don't force a tool too much
5. Don't grip a tool harder than is necessary to do a job
6. Try to keep the tool handles not too cold – so store them inside when possible
7. Always keep yourself warm and dry – this helps the blood circulation in your hands and arms

Work related stress



Well-designed, organised and managed work is good for us but when insufficient attention to job design, work organisation and management has taken place, it can result in Work related stress.

Work related stress develops because a person is unable to cope with the demands being placed on them. Stress, including work related stress, can be a significant cause of illness and is known to be linked with high levels of sickness absence, staff turnover and other issues such as more errors.

Stress can hit anyone at any level of the business and recent research shows that work related stress is widespread and is not confined to particular sectors, jobs or industries. That is why a population-wide approach is necessary to tackle it.

Definition of stress

HSE's formal definition of work related stress is:

"The adverse reaction people have to excessive pressures or other types of demand placed on them at work."

Stress is not an illness – it is a state. However, if stress becomes too excessive and prolonged, mental and physical illness may develop.

There is a difference between pressure and stress. Pressure can be positive and a motivating factor, and is often essential in a job. It can help us achieve our goals and perform better. Stress occurs when this pressure becomes excessive. Stress is a natural reaction to too much pressure.

If you need further information please call us on [01458 253682](tel:01458253682) or send us an email at info@wilkinssafety.co.uk

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Now to the latest HSE cases:

Building company fined £100,000 for tragic accident in Plymouth

A MAJOR building company has been fined £100,000 for failing to protect a delivery driver who was run over by a dumper truck.

JB Leadbitter has also been ordered to pay costs of £120,000 after an eight-day trial at Plymouth Crown Court.

The construction giant was found guilty by a jury of health and safety failings before the accident almost four years ago.

Delivery driver David Windsor fell in the path of the nine-ton vehicle and was run over.



The Village by the Sea site four years on

David Windsor, 62, of St George, Bristol, suffered life changing injuries, including severe brain injury, in the incident at a building site at Mount Wise, Devonport, on 7 October 2010.

He also sustained facial fractures, serious injuries to right arm, fractured ribs, a fractured pelvis, leg fractures and foot injuries all on his right side where the dumper ran over him. The injuries were life changing. He spent two weeks in intensive care, a month in a high dependency unit and was finally discharged home from a brain injury rehabilitation unit in April, 2011 – more than six months later.

Oxfordshire-based JB Leadbitter was sentenced today (19 September) after an investigation by the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) found the company failed to adequately manage and control workplace transport.

Plymouth Crown Court heard that Mr Windsor, a delivery driver, was delivering a mortar silo to the Leadbitter site, a former MoD property where 159 new homes were being built.

He was wearing high-visibility clothing, but was hit by the dumper as he was crossing the site to return to his lorry.

HSE established that there was no segregated, defined area provided for people on foot like Mr Windsor. JB Leadbitter, as the principal contractor for the site, had not produced or put in place a suitable traffic management plan to ensure the separation of vehicles and pedestrians using the roadway at the site.

JB Leadbitter and Co Ltd, of Grange Court, Abingdon Science Park, Abingdon, in Oxfordshire, was found guilty of breaching Section 3(1) of the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974. The company was fined £100,000 and ordered to pay full costs of around £100,000.

HSE Inspector Jonathan Harris, speaking after the hearing, said:

“This terrible incident has left Mr Windsor with significant and lasting injuries and could easily have led to his death. It is unlikely he will be able to return to work again.

“Simple forethought and planning could have avoided this happening. JB Leadbitter failed to identify risks to site workers and visitors, such as delivery drivers, in their construction phase plan and made no provision for segregating site vehicles and pedestrians at the top end of the site. Other workers on this large site were frequently exposed to serious risks as a result of this lack of planning.

“Workplace transport incidents are the second most common cause of serious and fatal incidents in the construction industry, yet they could easily be avoided by having proper plans in place and provision for pedestrians on site.”

On average, seven workers are killed every year as a result of collisions with vehicles or mobile plant on construction sites. A further 93 are seriously injured.

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BAE company sentenced over worker's firing range injury

BAE Systems Global Combat Systems Munitions Limited has been fined £80,000 for a serious safety breach after a worker's leg bone was shattered while test firing a gun on a range in Northumberland.

The 46-year-old employee, from Hexham, was seriously injured when a metal bolt weighing 7kg ejected from the back of the gun and into his left leg. He spent six weeks in hospital and his injured leg is now 20mm shorter than his right.

The incident, on 3 April 2008 at the company's Ridsdale range, was investigated by the Health and Safety Executive (HSE), which prosecuted the BAE Systems munitions subsidiary for safety failings.



Newcastle Crown Court

Newcastle Crown Court heard today (19 September) that an aiming device, known as a boresight, had been left in the barrel of the medium-calibre gun when it should have been removed before firing.

When the worker fired, a round smashed into the boresight, causing the round to collapse and jam at the end of the barrel. As a result, the gas which had propelled the round was trapped in the barrel and pressure began to build. As the employee turned the handle on the breech bolt holding the round, it was expelled with great force into his leg by the trapped gas.

An HSE investigation found that although BAE Systems Global Combat Systems Munitions Limited recognised the hazards of not removing a boresight before firing and had interlocked other guns to avoid this type of incident, they had failed to implement the same standards on this weapon.

BAE Systems Global Combat Systems Munitions Limited, Warwick House, Farnborough Aerospace Centre,

Featherstone, Farnborough, Hampshire, was fined £80,000 and ordered to pay £100,000 costs after pleading guilty to breaching Section 2(1) of the Health and Safety at Work etc Act 1974.

After the case, HSE Inspector Philip Smith, said:

“This is a highly specialised global company whose safety standards should be industry-leading. There were recognised preventative measures that should have been employed to make sure this kind of serious incident could not happen. As a result of their safety failure, a worker suffered a terrible injury.

“BAE Systems Global Combat Systems Munitions Limited was fully aware of the dangers of not removing a boresight before firing and had fitted interlocks onto their other guns to prevent this type of incident from occurring. However, the company neglected – for whatever reason – to make sure a similar guarding mechanism was in place with this weapon.

“This incident emphasises the need for management to ensure preventative measures are effectively implemented on all equipment used at work.”



If you have any queries on any health and safety matter, please contact Jon Wilkins on [01458 253682](tel:01458253682) or by email on jon@wilkinssafety.co.uk



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Safer in Our Hands