Occupational Vibration Exposure Stats and Facts



FACTS

1. Repeated exposure to high levels of vibration is known to cause injury to workers over time. They are two general types: hand-arm and whole-body vibration.
2. Hand-arm vibration exposure (HAV), besides being a known contributing factor to carpal tunnel syndrome and other ergonomic-related injuries, causes direct injury to the fingers and hand, affecting feeling, dexterity, and grip.
3. Hand-arm vibration syndrome or (HAV), is the medical term for symptoms caused by vibration damage that occurs in the hands, fingers, or arms. Nearly two million people are at risk of developing HAVS. Once the damage is done, it is permanent and so early detection of this injury is very important.
4. Whole-body vibration (WBV) is a consideration when dealing with higher-than-expected levels of low back pain and injury in the workforce and is one of the most pervasive causes of lost time and production output.
5. Whole-body vibration can cause fatigue, stomach problems, headache, loss of balance and “shakiness” shortly after or during exposure. After daily exposure over several years, whole-body vibration can affect the entire body and result in several health disorders. The combined effects of body posture, postural fatigue, dietary habits, and whole-body vibration are the possible causes for these disorders.

STATS

- more than 1.5–2 million workers in the United States (U.S.) are regularly exposed to hand-arm vibration (HAV) (also described as hand-transmitted vibration, or HTV) at work1).
- In the U.S.A. alone there are some 8-10 million people who are regularly exposed each day to occupational vibration.
- Study of occupational exposures to vibration, NIOSH estimates that 1.2 million workers in the United States are potentially exposed to hand-arm vibration These workers are potentially at risk of developing vibration syndrome.
- NIOSH found that vibration damage because of occupational exposure is more common than previously thought. This study showed that almost a quarter (21%) of participants were experiencing a range of symptoms and severities, and all these participants had experienced exposure to vibrations on the job.
- Vibration syndrome of stage 1 or greater severity was found in 31% of the

workers exposed 1.5 years or less, 41% of the workers exposed 1.5 to 3 years, and 71% of the workers exposed more than 3 years.