GOOD PRACTICE INFORMATION

Protecting Against Hand-Arm Vibration Syndrome

The Problem

Exposure to vibration can cause Hand-Arm Vibration Syndrome (HAVS) and Carpal tunnel syndrome. HAVS can be responsible for substantial physical impairment, disability, handicap and distress. It is important that efforts are made to eliminate and reduce the risk. Where the risk still exists, we must ensure that we have systems in place to record and monitor exposure levels and in some instances, offer the appropriate health surveillance.

Solutions

Elimination

A number of sites have developed 'Good Practice' to ensure proactive management of these risks. The team at C412 CSJV are one such example.

Following consideration of the risks at design stage, the team opted to use remote operated breakers, such as the one shown in the photograph (Brokk UK Ltd.). These remote operated machines help eliminate the risk of HAVS, by separating the operator from the machine. These machines can be used in various environments and applications.

Controlling and Record Keeping

Where vibrating tools are used, a 'HAV meter' system (Reactec Ltd.) monitors an individual's use of each tool and shows a warning light when the daily limit has been reached. A tool tag, programmed with the vibration rating, model and serial number of the vibrating tool is fixed directly to it. In addition, the HAV meter is allocated to an individual for the day (via a swipe card system) and a record of exposure is kept. The advantages are outlined below:

- ✓ Easy to use and robust enough for site
- ✓ Can be taken from tool to tool and will calculate daily exposure
- ✓ Visible warning light flashes when the Exposure Action Value (EAV) has been reached
- ✓ Data can be downloaded from the HAV meters, which allows it to be analysed and stored

For further information on the above systems, contact Mark Farrell at mark.farrell@csjvc411.co.uk