Courtley (Health & Safety) Ltd

February 2010 News Update

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The Gloves Don't Work!

They do just make it worse but I know I'll feel your grip again. There is a steady stream of "anti-vibration" ("AV") gloves coming onto the market claiming technical innovations and boasting "up to 70% vibration reduction". In practice, for virtually all applications, the vibration reduction they provide is negligible and the gloves are often both costly and un-ergonomic.

The theoretical increase in safe working time provided by what claim to be "high performance" AV gloves for an impact wench (an application which should favour gloves), for example, adds only 47 seconds to the calculated six minutes, 16 seconds without gloves. In fact, for most operations, "AV" gloves compromise the ergonomics to such a degree (requiring higher grip strength) that they are likely to increase the risk to the operator.

Where vibration is only fed into the palms of the hands, it may be possible to gain some benefit from such gloves, but each case would have to be carefully evaluated in it's own right.

Inside

Hand– Arm Vibration Word Search

K	P	X	Z	G	N	Q	H	F	K	R	Q	B	N	F	M	P	M
F	T	L	M	K	R	C	P	G	W	F	H	A	N	D	L	C	L
T	C	V	H	K	J	Q	J	V	H	V	K	F	N	N	H	M	V
T	B	T	R	M	Y	L	L	L	H	R	V	G	P	T	J	B	M
H	T	G	K	C	R	B	R	T	M	E	L	Y	W	F	B	T	J
T	Y	S	R	E	K	A	E	R	B	M	J	G	L	M	B	R	T
D	D	H	M	R	R	E	L	V	Z	M	F	K	P	K	M	R	N
V	W	X	V	M	V	Y	S	Y	M	I	N	B	N	Q	M	N	V
K	X	K	V	I	W	Z	P	O	G	R	N	S	W	L	K	L	L
Z	C	G	X	M	B	Q	L	N	D	T	L	U	L	Z	L	R	K
L	T	G	M	N	H	R	I	R	N	S	Y	S	C	Q	Y	H	N
L	R	Z	Z	K	L	P	A	Z	V	S	L	P	T	J	R	F	L
Z	E	T	P	M	M	K	K	T	L	W	T	E	X	V	J	L	H
B	D	L	F	A	M	K	M	O	I	R	H	N	F	Y	Y	A	M
W	N	L	D	T	C	X	O	R	J	O	J	S	R	N	V	C	R
G	I	D	W	X	P	T	K	G	W	M	N	I	N	S	V	K	C
T	R	B	L	N	W	F	K	P	K	L	D	O	R	H	R	G	C
N	G	K	R	M	G	M	R	R	N	T	X	N	T	R	F	D	R

Hidden Words

- Strimmer
- Damping
- Hand
- Vibration
- Suspension
- Havs
- Dose
- Grinder
- Tools

Question Time

1. On discovering a fire what is the first action you should take?
2. How can chemicals get into your body?
3. What are the main issues to be considered on manual handling?
4. What is the meaning of the following sign on an electrical appliance? 
5. What colours are a sign used to warn about hazards such as fork lift trucks, electricity or biological risks?
6. What is a safety data sheet?
7. What are the contents in a fire extinguisher with a black label?
8. What duties are placed on employees by Section 7 of the Health and Safety at Work etc Act 1974?
9. What is a Prohibition Notice?
10. What is the correct name for white asbestos?

Answers

1. Sound the fire alarm to commence the evacuation. 2. Injection, Inhalation, Ingestion and absorption. 3. Load, Individual, Task and Environment makes the job lighter. 4. The appliances is double insulated. 5. Yellow and black triangles are used to warn of hazards. 6. Sheets giving details of the name, chemical composition and properties of the substance, information the hazards and relevant standards, First Aid and fire fighting methods. 7. CO2 for liquid fires and fires where electrical equipment is involved and should not be used on metal or in an explosive atmosphere. 8. To take care of the health and safety of themselves and anyone else who may be affected by their actions and to co-operate with their employer and others to enable them to fulfil their legal obligations. 9. A prohibition Notice is a notice issued by the HSE or Local Authority identifying and halting a situation which involves or will involve a risk of injury. 10. White asbestos is Chrysotile. Blue is Crocidolite and brown is Amosite.

INFORMATION WATCH

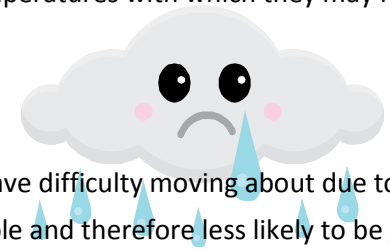
Title/Subject	Progress	Refer
Carriage of Dangerous Goods and Use of Transportable Pressure Equipment Regulations 2009	Implement in UK the European Directive on the Inland Transportation of Dangerous Goods	ed@Courtley.com
Health and Safety at Work Act 1974 (Application Outside Great Britain) (Variation) Order 2009	Amends the 2001 Order to extend the provisions of the Health and Safety at Work Act to the construction, operation and repair of wind farms and other energy structures.	tony@courtley.com
The Supply of Machinery (Safety) (Amendment) Regulations 2005	Deadline for manufacturers to ensure machines comply with amended essential health and safety requirements.	danielle@courtley.com
Chemical (Hazard Information and Packaging for Supply (Regulations 2009 (CHIP 4) In force 6 April 2009	Amend the current CHIP Regulations to align them with the transitional period of the European Regulation on the Classification, Labelling and Packaging of Substances and Mixtures (the CLP Regulation).	danielle@courtley.com

Please feel free to email or call any of the advisors for information or advice on any problems you may have.

Baby it's cold outside.....

Not everyone has the choice to stay at home out of the cold, rain and snow; the work that they do requires them to get on with it, irrespective of what the weather is up to. Inclement conditions can have adverse effects on peoples ability to concentrate, manipulate equipment, move about, use bodily strength, etc, so such conditions do need to be taken into account when drawing up a risk assessment for a job.

The natural climatic conditions and temperatures with which they may have to content - and the possible effects of that exposure - include the following:



Rain

When you are wet through, you may have difficulty moving about due to slippery surfaces, focusing on tasks or holding tools. Being wet makes us uncomfortable and therefore less likely to be giving the task in hand our full concentration. Employees will want to finish their work as quickly as possible so they can go inside and shelter.

Thunderstorms

As well as usually involving heavy rain, there is the threat of being struck by lightening. Obviously, the risk is greater among those who work high up on pylons, communication masts or inside scaffolding (while the Faraday cage effect should protect these employees, it will not safeguard those in the open or those who are working from metal ladders/walkways or tanks). The odds of being struck by lightening are however, are very low and would not normally be taken into account.

Snow and Ice

In addition to the problems wrought by low temperatures, snow and ice hamper movement to, from and around a work location or site. Pedestrians struggle to get from A to B safely, while those who venture behind the wheel are even more at risk of skidding and losing control of their vehicle. Of course gritted and/or cleared roads will facilitate movement but what about those who operate the snow plough, gritters and the first train and bus services of the day? Working in low temperatures can involve the following hazards:

Frost nip - this is caused by lack of blood flow to the nose, ears and fingers because they are losing so much heat, this can actually freeze the top layers of skin and they can easily become damaged without us knowing, e.g. hands can suffer cuts and grazes without being felt.

Frost bite - at or below 0^{o}C (32^{o}F), blood vessels close to the skin start to constrict which reduces the amount of blood flow in some areas of the body to dangerously low levels when left for too long. This lack of blood leads to the eventual freezing and death of skin tissue in the affected areas.

Snow blindness - exposure to reflected sunlight from snow, ice or water - even on overcast days - can result in sunburn of the tissues comprising the surface of the eye, as well as the retina, causing snow blindness.

Dehydration - normally associated with sweating on a hot day, dehydration can also occur in cold conditions. If a large amount of manual work is being carried out while wearing insulated clothing, the wearer will get hot and start sweating.

Hypothermia - this is a medical emergency that occurs when the body loses heat faster than it can produce it, thus causing a dangerously low body temperature.

Wind

By the time the wind speeds are up to around 40mph the ability to move around safely is impeded. High winds are a particular issue in relation to work at height - especially crane operations. The Met Office actually provides a 'tower crane forecast service', which gives mean and gust wind speeds (mph, at required heights), wind direction and weather forecasts to construction sites that use tower cranes.

Fog

Fog and mist obviously reduce visibility and make operating mobile plant, as well as basic driving, hazardous. People whose tasks take them out on foot into rural areas can become easily disorientated and lost. By is very nature fog/mist will also involve hazards associated with wet and cold weather.

Seasonal Affective Disorder

In addition to physical discomfort, bad weather can also have an adverse effect on our mental wellbeing. Seasonal Affective Disorder (the appropriately acronymed 'SAD') is a mood disorder in which people who have normal health throughout most of the year experience depressive symptoms during the winter - or less frequently, the summer - repeatedly, year after year.

Standing up to the Elements

Having taken into account the weather conditions that may assail workers, the next step is to consider possible control measures.

The first, as always, is to consider whether the job can be delayed until the weather conditions improve. Can the work be programmed to take into account the seasonal weather patterns? Can work at night, when temperatures plummet, be avoided?

If work activities do need to proceed, local and up-to-date weather forecasts need to be obtained and disseminated before workers set off. Those working well away from their base and/or in remote areas/off the coast must go well equipped with necessary PPE, maps and navigational devices, tents, food, water, first-aid kit, torch, whistle etc. (training will be required on the correct use and /or interpretation of some of this equipment).

Provision of weather-proof clothing must be made carefully in consultation with the employee, as this is not always the answer. For some tasks, such clothing can be cumbersome and make moving about more difficult. Hence, the material and construction of garments, etc. must be appropriate.

A reliable communication system is also crucial; it's no good relying on a mobile phone if there is poor or absent signal in the area being visited.

Tower Crane Register Regs Due in April

The HSE board has formally agreed detailed recommendations for a statutory tower crane register. The recommendations - which follow a three-month consultation exercise will now go to ministers for approval. New Regulations putting the plans into effect should come into force in April 2010.

Eight people, including a member of the public, have died in incidents involving tower cranes since 2000. “We have learnt a great deal from recent incidents and are working together with hirers, suppliers, manufacturers and stakeholders to ensure that anything we have learnt is acted upon”, said the HSE’s chief inspector of construction Philip White.

The proposed Regulations place the duty to notify on the employer, require notification of the relevant information within 14 days of thorough examination of the crane and require cranes already erected when the Regulations come into force to be registered within 28 days. An estimated 1800 conventional tower cranes currently operate in Britain, with around 1300 in use at any one time.

Duty-holders can register electronically via the HSE website, which is due to go live on 6 April 2010. Details required will include: the site address; the name and address of the crane owners; features needed to identify the crane; the date of its thorough examination, plus information on the employer for whom the examination was made; and whether the examination detected any defects posing a risk of serious injury.

Registration will cost £20 and the document will be available to the public. Following ministerial approval, the HSE will send out information to all duty-holders over the next few months.

And a great big Courtley welcome to.....

Graham Macdonald, who coincidentally didn't have a farm. Graham is our newest member of staff who joined the company at the beginning of this month. He comes to us from a career in construction and will be taking on the role of Health and Safety technician.

Up-coming Training Courses

Site Managers Safety Training Scheme (SMSTS)
11 March - 8 April
6 April - 28 April

PASMA Tower Training
10 March

Site Managers Safety Training (SMSTS) Refresher
25 & 26 February
22 & 23 March

Free

Asbestos Awareness
22 February

Fire Marshal
3 March

We are also arranging an Abrasive Wheels and Harness Training day, call for details.

We will be arranging more Courtley certified courses (free to members), all members are sent an email when one is arranged. If you think you may not have been receiving our email, please contact Emma at: emma@courtley.com to check that she has the correct email address for you.

Q & A

Ergonomics

Q I work for a company with a large number of offices. It has been decided to centralise our office-furniture purchasing procedures and i have been asked to have an input in relation to the ergonomic aspects of this. What do I need to consider?

- Thedopolopodis

A Hi Theo, as you may know 'ergonomics is a science concerned with the 'fit' between people and their work. The aim is to ensure that each piece of furniture suits the user and their work, therefore it has to be able to cope with two variables: it should accommodate the range of tasks involved in a particular job and it should comfortably and safely accommodate all people who are likely to use the furniture on a regular basis. For more information, I would recommend BS3044: Guide to Ergonomics Principles in the Design and Selection of Office Furniture.

Permits to Work

Q What is the legal status of a permit to work?

- Hubert

A Hi Hubie, permit to work is a key part of a safe system of work where the risk involved in an operation is higher than standard systems can deal with; a control mechanism for potentially high-risk scenarios. If you've identified a situation you believe warrants using a permit, you then have to ensure that the procedure and additional health and safety measures identified are completed to the letter. Failure to partially or fully implement the system will be viewed as very serious by both enforcers who are investigating an incident associated with the operation and by any court during proceedings, owing to the fact that the organisation has identified the potentially high risk, but has then allowed the activity to take place without upholding the necessary safety controls. Permits will have names, signatures and dates on them indicating acceptance of responsibility and therefore a degree of liability in law for those in control, under Section 7 or Section 37 of the Health and Safety at Work Act. Because of this, employees and those in control of permitted works must appreciate the importance of the system, the role they play in it and the obvious shortcomings of such controls.

Please call the office on 0870 300 8174 for specific advice.

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