



Occupational hygiene – physical and chemical hazards

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Health hazards

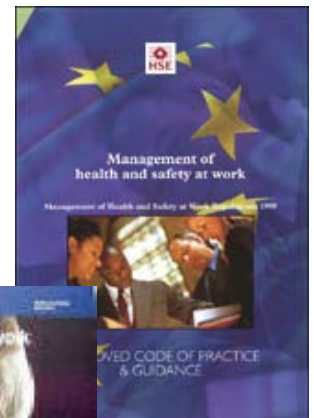
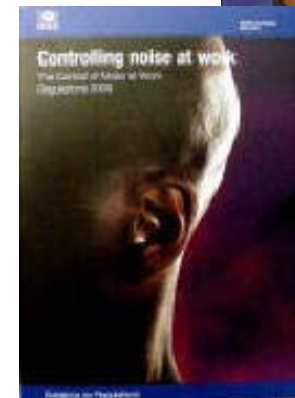
- Substances and work processes that can cause ill-health
- Hundreds of known hazardous substances
 - Physical e.g. noise, vibration
 - Chemical e.g. solvents, wet cement, silica
 - Biological e.g. leptospirosis, legionnaires disease
- Can lead to a range of health problems e.g. asthma, dermatitis, cancer, hearing loss



Legal position

- Legislation – sets out employer responsibilities
- Associated guidance – sets out actions required to meet the legislation requirements
- Occupational ill-health is preventable through good management processes
- Consequences of non-compliance are significant to both
 - The employer
 - The employee

 Zero accidents
Zero harm
Zero compromise



Employers responsibilities

- Legal responsibility to protect the health of employees working with hazardous substances
- Identifying the hazards
- Determine the risk that someone might be harmed
- Removing the risk
- Reducing/controlling the risk to a level that will not cause harm
- Provide PPE



Introduce health surveillance

- Where the work/substance is known to damage health
- Where there are valid ways to detect the disease or health changes
- Where it is reasonably likely that damage to health may occur under particular conditions at work
- Where it is likely to benefit the employee



Occupational skin disease

- Skin irritants/sensitisers – e.g. wet cement
- Skin surveillance consists of
 - Skin checks and skin health questionnaire
 - Baseline – within 6 weeks of starting work, then annually by health professional
 - Responsible person to monitor and report problems between assessments



Respiratory disease

- Caused by respiratory sensitisers such as wood dusts
- Health surveillance consists of respiratory questionnaire and lung function test
 - Pre-placement
 - 3 months into employment
 - Every 6 months for first 2 years
 - Annual



Noise induced hearing loss

- Caused by exposure to high levels of noise
- Health surveillance is required for employees exposed to noise levels of 85 dB(A) and consists of hearing questionnaire, visual examination of the ear and hearing test
 - Pre-placement
 - Annual for 2 years
 - 3 yearly



Hand arm vibration syndrome

- Caused by working with vibrating tools
- Health surveillance consists of HAVS questionnaire and assessment by HAVS trained medical professional
 - Baseline – pre-placement
 - At 6 months for newly exposed worker
 - Annual questionnaire (can be done by responsible person)
 - Every 3rd year by HAVS trained medical professional



Records

- Health records must be maintained as per legislation requirements
- Provide a copy to the employee
- The time taken for the symptoms of occupational ill-health varies considerably for example
 - Early signs of occupational skin or respiratory disease can show as early as few weeks or months
 - Early signs of occupational cancers can take many years
- Occupational diseases are RIDDOR reportable



Benefits of health surveillance

- Forms part of your risk management approach by monitoring the effectiveness of your control measures
- Protect employees by identifying early signs of occupational ill-health
- Opportunity to provide further training to employees in safe working practices e.g. proper use of PPE
- Opportunity for employees to raise any concerns



Questions ?

