

SPECIAL ISSUE: The Next Revolution in the Global Standardization of Occupational Vibration Prevention

Preface

The Physical Agents Directive (Vibration) was adopted by the European Union in 2002. It builds on existing general employers' duties to manage risks to health and safety of works exposed to vibration, and introduces exposure action and limit values for both hand-arm vibration and whole-body vibration, setting minimum standards for the control of vibration risks across Europe. New Regulations on Vibration at Work will be introduced in EU countries on 6 July 2005 to implement the Directive. The new regulations will also affect many non-EU industries exporting to European countries, such as vehicle makers and hand-held toolmakers.

Prolonged exposure to Occupational Vibration (whole-body vibration and hand-arm vibration) can damage the human body. National and International standards indicate how occupational vibration should be measured, evaluated, and assessed. Although the ISO/TC108/SC4 committee has published international standards for the measurement, evaluation, and assessment of occupational vibration, more advanced standards are awaited for preventing workers' vibration-induced health problems in the world.

In this special issue, we are focusing on the next revolution in global standardization of prevention of occupational vibration, not only in the medical field, but also in the field of engineering. We hope that this special issue will promote further research and practice of occupational vibration to improve workers' health and work conditions and international standards, and we are extremely grateful to all the distinguished scientists who kindly submitted their papers with essential information in response to our requests.

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Editors of Special Issue 2005