



# WOODNIG NEWS

Newsletter  
of HSE's  
Manufacturing Sector -  
Woodworking Group

Issue 27

October 2005

## NOISE AND VIBRATION ROADSHOWS

New regulations for the control of risks from vibration came into force in July 2005, and noise regulations will be updated in early 2006.

The Control of Vibration at Work Regulations 2005 will have an impact on parts of the woodworking industry. Recent research found that although the risk from vibration at hand-fed fixed machinery such as circular saws and surface planers was low, greater risks were created by hand-sanding operations and the use of impact tools, such as nail guns. Of the sixteen operators assessed for the research, half were exposed above the daily exposure action value of 2.5 m/s<sup>2</sup>A(8) and two were exposed above the daily 5 m/s<sup>2</sup>A(8) Exposure Limit Value as defined in the Regulations.

The industry will also be affected by the reductions in the 'action levels' in the forthcoming Control of Noise at Work Regulations and by the introduction of a requirement for health surveillance.

To find out more, the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) and the EEF – the manufacturers' organisation – will jointly be running a series of noise and vibration roadshows across

Great Britain in October and November 2005. The roadshows will offer an opportunity to discuss the new Regulations in more depth, to demonstrate practical solutions and to answer questions people may have.

For more information visit:  
[www.hse.gov.uk/vibration/eefevent.pdf](http://www.hse.gov.uk/vibration/eefevent.pdf)

### *Dates for Noise and Vibration Roadshows 2005*

Bristol 11 October  
Birmingham 14 October  
Warrington 18 October  
Leeds 19 October  
Barleythorpe (near Leicester) 20 October  
Wales (Bridgend) 1 November  
London 3 November  
Washington (second event) 18 November

Further information on the new Regulations may be found at: [www.hse.gov.uk/vibration/information.htm](http://www.hse.gov.uk/vibration/information.htm) and [www.hse.gov.uk/noise](http://www.hse.gov.uk/noise).

## HSE's priorities for the woodworking industry 2005/06

Our focus for this year is on reducing disease from wood dust. Wood dust is currently one of the top eight asthmagens in UK workplaces, and is the fifth highest reason for the payment of disability benefit.

At their visits to woodworking factories, inspectors have been asked to:

- promote the use of vacuum systems to replace dry sweeping and the use of airlines for removing wood dust;

- ensure that extraction systems have a statutory examination at least every 14 months;
- ensure that woodworking companies have, as a minimum, pre-start and ongoing (questionnaire based) health surveillance in place.

You can download sample health surveillance questionnaires and obtain further advice on tackling asthmagens at [www.hse.gov.uk/asthma](http://www.hse.gov.uk/asthma).

# RISE IN FATAL ACCIDENTS

There were four fatal accidents in woodworking premises in 2003/04 – this represents a reverse in the downward trend we have seen over the past two years.

Although machinery (notably kick-backs from circular saws) continues to kill people, at least two of the fatalities were related to workplace transport.

There was some good news however in that the overall rate of accidents for the industry as a whole came down quite substantially. In 2003/04 the provisional rate of accidents measured per 100 000 fell from 1310 to 1228, a decrease of 6%. The biggest fall was in wood sawing and planing – but this was offset by a large rise in the rate of accidents in furniture manufacturing.

## Small CNC routers

There appears to be some confusion over the standards of guarding on small 'budget' CNC routing machines. These typically use a 'plotter' style vacuum table incorporated with a router head which can be programmed to travel in three planes. Some have automatic tool changing facilities. The danger points on the machine – these include the cutter and trapping points created by the moving beam and router head – must be safeguarded.

BS EN 848:3 applies to CNC routers and is a good starting reference for suppliers of new machines, although compliance is not compulsory. Manufacturers who choose not to use this standard have to undergo a conformity assessment procedure to satisfy themselves that the machines meet essential health and safety requirements before affixing their 'CE' mark. Suppliers who sell already 'CE' marked machines have a legal duty to ensure that the machine is safe before supply.

The Provision and Use of Work Equipment Regulations 1988 apply to users of these machines and inspectors have taken action to bring some poorly guarded machines up to a legal minimum standard.

## More work to do on machinery braking

Inspection visits across the UK are showing that while many companies have fully complied with the requirements for braking woodworking machines, others still have a long way to go. As a reminder, circular saws, hand-fed cross cut saws and single and double-ended tenoners (see reference below for full list) should have been fitted with brakes before 5 December 2003. Inspectors coming across non-compliant machines are now issuing improvement notices.

The next deadline for the fitting of brakes to narrow band saws, re-saws, hand-fed routing machines, thicknessing machines, planing/thicknessing machines, vertical spindle moulders and surface planing machines is 5 December 2005. Companies are advised not to leave it to the last minute; several service companies were unable to meet the rush prior to the 2003 deadline and many companies found themselves on the wrong side of the law.

Full details of the legal requirements for braking can be found in HSE's woodworking information sheet *PUWER 98: Retrofitting of braking to woodworking machines*, available at: [www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/wis38.pdf](http://www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/wis38.pdf).

## Watch your step 2005

HSE is running a major national initiative from 3– 28 October 2005 that will focus on raising awareness about the financial and personal costs and causes of slip and trip accidents at work.

Slips and trips are often seen by the unfortunate victim as embarrassing – and a source of amusement to lookers-on.

However, slips and trips are the most common cause of injury in UK workplaces. Each year slips and trips accidents cause well over 11 000 major injuries, more than 80% of which result in fractures. The costs of these

accidents to the UK economy and employers have been estimated at £800 million and £500 million, respectively. The overall aim of the slips and trips campaign is to promote the vision that slips and trips should be taken seriously and in proportion to the injuries and losses that they cause.

The main causes of slip and trip accidents in woodworking is poor housekeeping. Go to the HSE's slips and trips web pages to find out what you can do to reduce your risks:  
[www.hse.gov.uk/watchyourstep/index.htm](http://www.hse.gov.uk/watchyourstep/index.htm).

# Tooling

The message on the very real benefits of Limited Cutter Projection ('chip limited') Tooling is definitely spreading. We have had several anecdotal accounts from people who would have had very serious injuries if they had not replaced their old tooling with chip limited tooling. Instead of amputated fingers, they got away with lacerations and stitches. However, inspectors continue to come across companies who are 'burying their heads in the sand'.

The deadline for using chip limited tooling passed on 3 December 2003. Companies who have not adopted it are likely to face improvement notices.

The information sheet *Puwer 98: Selection of tooling for use with hand-fed woodworking machines* provides further information, available at: [www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/wis37.pdf](http://www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/wis37.pdf).

## Woodworking safety and health awareness days (SHADs)

A further round of SHADs is planned between October 2005 and April 2006 in the following locations. If you would like further information or to register please contact the relevant person for your preferred location.

Lincolnshire contact: Ian Weekes

Tel 0115 971 2871 [ian.weekes@hse.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:ian.weekes@hse.gsi.gov.uk)

West Scotland contact: Linda Aitken

Tel: 0141 275 3101 [linda.aitken@hse.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:linda.aitken@hse.gsi.gov.uk)

Dorset contact: Larry Kemp

Tel: 01179 886009 [larry.kemp@hse.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:larry.kemp@hse.gsi.gov.uk)

Kent contact: Tracey Stonley

Tel: 01342 334213 [tracy.stonley@hse.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:tracy.stonley@hse.gsi.gov.uk)

# Work at Height Regulations 2005

The new Work at Height Regulations 2005 came into effect on 6 April 2005. They have replaced all earlier regulations about working at height, and they apply to work at any height. A key feature is the introduction of a hierarchy for managing the risks and selecting equipment for work at height. Dutyholders must:

- avoid work at height where they can;
- use work equipment or other measures to prevent falls where they cannot avoid work at height; and
- where they cannot eliminate the risk of a fall, use work equipment or other measures to minimise the distance and consequences of a fall should one occur.

HSE have produced a brief guide summarising what you need to do to comply with the Regulations: [www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/indg401.pdf](http://www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/indg401.pdf).

This guidance is of particular relevance to the woodworking industry – 2004 saw yet another fatal accident at a woodworking company involving a fall through a roof. All companies are urged to look again at the need for access to roofs – quick jobs such as unblocking of gutters and running repairs to extraction equipment are common reasons for people to go onto roofs. A bit of forethought and planning could avoid a tragic and unnecessary accident.

## Braking and emergency stopping of machines in school and college workshops

We have received several enquiries from schools and colleges asking for clarification of the apparent conflict between the need to brake certain woodworking machines and the requirement for a wall mounted isolator in classrooms. These switches are activated by teachers in 'emergency' situations and cut the electrical supply to the machinery in the classroom. This can remove power from the braking system, resulting in a potentially dangerous situation.

If a risk assessment of the classroom or workshop shows that the provision of a wall mounted isolation switch is necessary, then its installation should also allow compliance with the braking requirements of PUWER 1998. This can be achieved through the provision of a 'category 1' emergency

stop which initiates a 'controlled stop' where power remains available to the braking systems, and is only removed when the 'stop' has been achieved.

For further details you should consult the installer of your braking systems or your electrical contractor.

Note: We are aware of accidents in woodworking factories that have happened when machinists have switched braked machines off using the isolator, or where they have stopped the machine and then isolated it before it has fully braked, and approached the cutters, not realising that they are still rotating. It is important to train operators not to isolate machines until the cutters have come to rest.

## Wood action

HSE is facilitating a meeting of key trade associations from the woodworking industry to discuss how we might work together in partnership to drive down accidents and ill health in the industry. The meeting is due to be held on 22 November 2005 in our Leeds office.

Similar initiatives with other industries have been very successful – in some cases, reductions of up to 50% have been achieved.

## New faces on the woodworking team

Alan Scobbie has joined the Manufacturing Sector team and has specific responsibility for the woodworking industry. Alan is based in our Nottingham office and will be dealing with a variety of woodworking projects for the sector. He is best contacted by email at: alan.scobbie@hse.gsi.gov.uk.



Some readers have asked us whether they could receive **WOODNIG NEWS** by email – it makes it easier to access the links to the references.

If you would like to receive subsequent editions electronically, please send an email to: wendie.drammeh@hse.gsi.gov.uk.

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What do you think of **WOODNIG NEWS**?  
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Would you like more copies?  
Send your views to maureen.kingman@hse.gsi.gov.uk or write to the address below.

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**WOODNIG NEWS** is produced by HSE's Manufacturing Sector - Woodworking Group, based at HSE, Marshalls Mill, Marshall Street, Leeds LS11 9YJ.

## NEW PUBLICATIONS FROM HSE

Details of recently produced HSE publications which may be of interest to the woodworking industry are listed below.

*Are you making the best use of lifting and handling aids?* INDG398 is a leaflet aimed at managers, employees and their representatives and anyone involved in selecting lifting and handling aids. It uses case studies and illustrations to help people to make decisions on how they can reduce the risk of back injuries due to manual handling. Single copies are available free from HSE Books or priced packs of 15 ISBN 0 7176 2900 7.

*Control the risks from hand-arm vibration: Advice for employers on the Control of Vibration at Work Regulations 2005* INDG175(rev2) has been revised because of the new Control of Vibration at Work Regulations 2005 which come into force on 6 July 2005. It is aimed at employers of workers who frequently and regularly use tools or machinery such as hand-held power tools, hand-guided powered equipment or powered machines which process hand-held materials. The leaflet explores the jobs which are affected; how to assess and control the risk; what employees need to know; and health surveillance measures. Single copies are available free from HSE Books or priced packs of 10 ISBN 0 7176 6117 2.

*Hand-arm vibration - advice for employees* INDG2969(rev1) is a pocket card aimed at those who regularly use hand-held powered equipment. It explains what hand-arm vibration syndrome (HAVS) is, what the symptoms are and how to reduce the risks of developing the disease. Single copies are available free from HSE Books or priced packs of 25 ISBN 0 7176 6118 0.

## Further information

HSE priced and free publications are available by mail order from HSE Books,  
PO Box 1999, Sudbury, Suffolk CO10 2WA  
Tel: 01787 881165 Fax: 01787 313995  
Website: [www.hsebooks.co.uk](http://www.hsebooks.co.uk)  
(HSE priced publications are also available from bookshops and free leaflets can be downloaded from HSE's website: [www.hse.gov.uk](http://www.hse.gov.uk).)

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CF83 3GG.