

BRIEFING 14

Noise & Vibration

Long-term exposure to noise and vibration causes permanent hearing loss and Hand-Arm Vibration Syndrome (HAVS). Both are controlled under specific HSE regulations.

Noise

- Wear hearing protection in marked high-noise zones and when using noisy tools.
- Use quieter methods and tools where available; keep others out of noisy areas.
- If you must raise your voice to be heard at 2 metres, noise levels are a concern.

Hand-arm vibration (HAVS)

- Limit time on vibrating tools (breakers, grinders, SDS drills) — follow trigger-time limits.
- Use the right tool for the job and keep it well maintained and sharp.
- Take breaks, keep hands warm and dry, and rotate tasks where possible.
- Report tingling, numbness or whiteness in fingers — early signs of HAVS.

Your responsibilities

Use the controls and PPE provided, stay within tool usage limits, and report any symptoms or any tool that vibrates excessively.

STOP & ASK Tingling or numbness in the fingers after using vibrating tools is an early warning of HAVS — report it without delay.