Occupational Vibration Exposure Fatality File

Company fined after exposing workers to Hand Arm Vibration Syndrome (HAVS)

What happened?

The HSE is reminding companies of the necessity of monitoring workers' health after an organization was fined for exposing six maintenance team workers to Hand Arm Vibration Syndrome (HAVS). This was discovered following a health surveillance program.

What went wrong? What were the causes? Investigation found:

- The six workers' conditions were likely to have been caused or worsened by the use of vibratory power tools. Staff in the maintenance and refurbishment departments experienced significant exposure to hand arm vibration in their daily work which put them at risk of developing or exacerbating existing HAVS;
- The company neither adequately planned its working methods nor trained or informed employees on the risks to their health;
- The company did not limit the duration and magnitude of exposure to vibration and failed to put in place suitable health surveillance to identify problems at an early stage.
- Hand Arm Vibration Syndrome (HAVS) is a serious and permanent condition caused by regular and frequent exposure to hand-arm vibration. HAVS results in tingling, numbness, pain and loss of strength in the hands which may affect the ability to do work safely and cause pain, distress and sleep disturbance.