



HAND/ARM VIBRATION SYNDROME

Toolbox Talks for the members of Iowa Association of Municipal Utilities

September 2016

Hand/Arm Vibration Syndrome (HAVS) is caused by the frequent & repeated use of hand-held vibrating tools; such as power drills, hammer drills, concrete vibrators, chainsaws, jackhammers, powered lawn mowers, brush cutters, pedestal grinders or oscillating tools. The loss of feeling or pins & needles in one or more fingers is usually one of the first symptoms of HAVS, followed by not being able to feel things with your fingers, loss of strength in your hands, tips of fingers going white (and possibly then red) and becoming painful in cold or wet weather.

The prevention of HAVS is key because once you experience the onset of symptoms, there is no cure.

- Buy good quality, low vibration tools.
- Use urethane power tool handle grips or dampening pads.
- Poorly maintained tools tend to develop worn or loose parts that may vibrate.
- Keep your hands warm so that blood flow is not restricted.
- Avoid smoking as this also restricts blood flow.
- Grip the tool as lightly as possible, as not to restrict blood flow.
- Keep the cold exhaust air of pneumatic tools away from the hands.
- Use work rotation as a method to reduce the exposure to vibration.



- One of the key elements of preventing HAVS is keeping the hands warm and maintaining good blood flow.
- Use good quality gloves with vibration dampening qualities built in.
- True anti-vibration gloves are labeled “meet ANSI S2.73/ ISO 10819 standards”.
- Practice finger/hand stretching & massaging to assist good blood flow.