

PHYSICAL AGENTS REGULATIONS 2024

Practical Implementation & Compliance Guide

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SAIOSH National Webinar | 2025

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SESSION COVERS

Reg 9 — Cold Stress

Reg 10 — Heat Stress

Reg 11 — Illumination

Reg 12 — Indoor Air Quality

Reg 13 — Vibration

Reg 14 — Non-Ionising Radiation

**~ 5 months remaining — deadline: 6
September 2026
Now is the time to plan →**

Session Objectives & Structure

What you will take away — and how we get there

PART 1

Garth Hunter

Compliance requirements
& stressor walkthrough

PART 2

Dr Greg Kew

Medical aspects &
surveillance requirements

CLOSE

Q&A

Action plan &
open questions

By the end of this session you will be able to:

- **Identify** which work areas in your organisation are affected by the PAR 2024
- **Know** the key OELs and Action Levels for each regulated physical stressor
- **Understand** the hierarchy of controls and monitoring obligations
- **Plan** a compliance roadmap with ~ 5 months to the September 2026 deadline

Regulatory Timeline & Transition Period

From Environmental Regulations 1987 to Physical Agents Regulations 2024



KEY FACTS ABOUT PAR 2024

20

Regulations

9

Physical Stressors

CP

Competent Person model
(replaces AIA for most
monitoring)



Criminal liability
Regs 3–18: up to 12 months /
fine

Definitions

"**physical agent**" means a source of energy which may result in injury or disease after exposure and includes, but is not limited to, **cold stress, heat stress, vibration, non-ionising radiation and illumination**;

"**action level**" means the level of a physical agent at which specified actions or counter measures must be taken;

"**vulnerable employee**" means an employee who is at a higher risk of injury, disease or complications caused by exposure to a physical agent;

"**cold stress**" means a condition that occurs when the body can no longer maintain its normal core temperature;

"**equivalent chill temperature**" means the expression of **wind-chill** reflecting the cooling power of wind on exposed flesh, which takes into account both dry-bulb temperature and wind speed;

"**heat stress**" means the total heat load to which an employee may be exposed from the combined effects of metabolic heat, environmental factors and clothing requirements;

"**clothing adjustment value**" means the single number that is added to the wet-bulb globe temperature to represent the effects of clothing worn during an activity;

Definitions

"**indoor air quality**" means the totality of attributes of indoor air at the workplace that affect a person's health and well-being;

"**occupational non-ionising radiation**" means **all radiations and fields of the electromagnetic spectrum that do not** normally have sufficient energy to produce ionisation in matter and includes optical radiation and the electromagnetic field;

"**optical radiation**" means the part of the electromagnetic spectrum that includes **infrared radiation, visible light** and ultraviolet radiation;

"**electromagnetic field**" means the **static electric, static magnetic** and time-varying electric and magnetic fields with frequencies up to 300 GHz;

"**pitch, yaw and roll**" means the three dimensions of movement when an object moves through a medium;

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"**optical radiation**" means the part of the electromagnetic spectrum that includes infrared radiation, visible light and ultraviolet radiation;

"**vibration**" means the mechanical, periodic or random oscillations of an object about an equilibrium point;

"**whole-body vibration**" means mechanical vibration that is transmitted into the body, when seated or standing, through the supporting surface, during a work activity.

"**hand-arm vibration**" means the mechanical vibration which is transmitted into the hands and arms during a work activity;

Definitions

"**competent person**" means—

(a) (i) in terms of the **exposure risk assessment**, a person who has, in respect of the work or task to be performed, **the required knowledge, training and experience in the physical agent** and, **where applicable, relevant qualifications specific to or including the physical agent**: Provided that where appropriate qualifications and training are registered in terms of the provisions of the National Qualifications Framework Act, 2008 (Act No. 67 of 2008), those qualifications and that training must be regarded as the required qualifications and training; or

(ii) in terms of the **exposure monitoring or inspections and tests of control measures**, a person who has, in respect of the work or task to be performed, **the required knowledge, training and experience in the identified physical agent and the relevant qualifications specific to or including the identified physical agent**: Provided that where appropriate qualifications and training are registered in terms of the provisions of the National Qualifications Framework Act, 2008, those qualifications and that training must be regarded as the required qualifications and training; and

(b) a person who is familiar with the Act and the applicable regulations made under the Act;

The Competent Person Model — A Positive Shift

South Africa now aligns with global practice — AIA replaced for most monitoring functions

Country	Approval required?	Practice model	Key legislation
USA	No	Competent person (CIH preferred)	OSHA 29 CFR 1910/1926
UK	No	Competent person (BOHS preferred)	COSHH / Vibration Regs
Australia	No	Competent person, guidance-based	WHS Regulations
Canada	No	Competent person, province-specific	Provincial OHS Acts
New Zealand	No	Competent person, PCBU model	Health & Safety at Work Act 2015
SA — Old	Yes (AIA + SANAS)	Dual AIA + accreditation model	OHSA / Env. Regs 1987
SA — PAR 2024 ✓	No (most functions)	Competent Person — aligns with global practice	OHSA / Physical Agents Regs 2024

✓ SA now aligns with USA, UK, Australia, Canada and NZ — a widely welcomed modernisation

✓ Competent Persons must show relevant knowledge, training and experience per stressor

General Compliance Framework

Reg 4 (Risk Assessment) and Reg 5 (Monitoring) are the foundation of everything

REG 4 — RISK ASSESSMENT (Do this first)

- Must cover all 9 physical stressors relevant to your workplace
- Identify: which stressor, source, who is exposed, existing controls
- Must be done by, or supervised by, a Competent Person
- Update when processes, patterns or controls change
- If no employee is exposed at or above the Action Level → document that conclusion
- This document is your legal foundation for everything else

REG 5 — MONITORING & MEASUREMENT

- Baseline monitoring required where Risk Assessment shows possible exposure at Action Level
- Minimum repeat period: 12 months where OEL may be exceeded
- Methods must comply with relevant SANS standards
- Records kept for at least 40 years
- Signed off by Competent Person — no longer needs AIA sign-off (most stressors)

■ **Key rule:** No risk assessment (Reg 4) = you cannot prove compliance with any other regulation. Both documents must be available for inspection — keep them current, signed and dated.

Regulation 15: Hierarchy of Controls & Criminal Liability

Reg 15 — deeper insights on control obligations and personal criminal exposure

REG 15 — HIERARCHY OF CONTROLS

- Strict order: Elimination → Substitution → Engineering → Administrative → PPE — each step must be considered before moving to the next
- PPE is the last resort — you must document why higher-order controls are not reasonably practicable before relying on PPE
- Review controls after every monitoring cycle — if exposure remains at or above the OEL, the current control is legally insufficient
- Document the control selected and your reasoning — this record is your primary defence in a criminal prosecution or inspector visit

REG 8 — MEDICAL SURVEILLANCE

- Medical screening & surveillance
- Triggered by risk assessment and the opinion of an OMP
- Designed by Occupational Medical Practitioner (OMP) implemented by Occupational Health Practitioner (OHP)
- Certificate of fitness issued to employer — clinical detail confidential
- Program documented

CRIMINAL LIABILITY — Regulations 3 to 18

- ▶ Any breach of Regs 3–18 is a criminal offence — maximum 12 months' imprisonment OR a fine (or both)
- ▶ Failing to do a risk assessment, failing to monitor, failing to control, or failing to provide medical surveillance are all separate criminal matters — not paperwork oversights
- ▶ Directors and senior managers face personal criminal liability under Section 37 of the OHS Act — documented compliance is your protection; ignorance is not a defence

10,000 labour inspectors to enforce workplace laws nationwide

Thobeka Ngema | Updated 1 month ago

Regulation 3 — Information, Instruction and Training

The most common compliance gap — and the question to ask your training provider

WHAT THE LAW REQUIRES

- Training on physical agents for all affected employees
- Trainer must be a Competent Person for that specific stressor
- Generic safety courses do not satisfy this requirement
- A certificate without trainer credentials has no regulatory value

WHAT EMPLOYERS MUST KEEP

- Competence evidence of the trainer — qualifications, registration, experience
- Attendance registers — signed, per session, per employee, per stressor
- Training content — course outline, learning objectives
- Retained for the duration of employment

CRITICAL GAP — CHECK NOW

- Most employers have NOT used Competent Persons for physical agent training
- SETA's & QCTO qualifications do not apply here — no QCTO quals exist for specific PAR stressors
- Employer bears full legal liability if training cannot be validated

? Is your training provider a Competent Person under PAR 2024? — Ask this question before September 2026.

Regulation 9 — Cold Stress — **Strictest in the World**

ECT = dry-bulb temperature + wind speed combined — this new basis significantly lowers the practical trigger point

Aspect	Old (1987)	New (PAR 2024)
OEL trigger	6°C dry-bulb	10°C Equivalent Chill Temperature (Table 1)
Measurement	Thermometer only	Dry-bulb temperature + air velocity
Monitoring period	Not specified	Min. 4 hrs — coldest quarter of year AND coldest shift
Work-rest regimes	Not specified	Table 3 gives structured rest times by ECT level
Medical surveillance	Not required	Triggered by exposure risk, according to the opinion of an OMP

EMPLOYER ACTIONS — Cold Stress

- Highest-risk sectors: cold rooms and freezers (food industry), refrigerated transport, outdoor winter construction, mining in elevated areas — check ALL environments that could reach 10°C ECT
- Measure BOTH dry-bulb temperature AND air velocity — at 4°C with a 20 km/h wind, ECT drops to approximately -2°C, well past the OEL trigger
- Cold rooms at 4–8°C with any air movement will exceed the 10°C ECT OEL — these environments trigger monitoring, Table 3 work-rest regimes AND medical surveillance now
- Build a written cold work programme before September 2026: ECT monitoring records, Table 3 work-rest schedules, warm-up facilities, buddy system and cold stress first-aid training

Regulation 10 — Heat Stress

Heat stress occurs when WBGT exceeds 30°C — radiant heat required to trigger it; rising global temperatures are expanding the affected workforce

Aspect	Old (1987)	New (PAR 2024)
OEL (4-hr TWA)	General provisions only	WBGT 30°C — aligns with ISO 7933 / ACGIH light-work TLV
Action Level	Not specified	WBGT 27°C — triggers hazard identification and review
Control pathway	General duty only	AL=identify & review; OEL=full controls required (Reg 10(3))
Clothing adjustment	Not included	Table 9 — Clothing Adjustment Values (ACGIH/ISO best practice)
Acclimatisation	Not specified	Required at Action Level — protocol specified in regulation

EMPLOYER ACTIONS — Heat Stress

- Highest-risk sectors: outdoor construction and agriculture, foundries and smelters, commercial kitchens, boiler rooms, deep mining — WBGT monitoring is now a legal requirement in all these environments
- Apply Table 9 Clothing Adjustment Values for heavy or impermeable PPE — chemical suits can add 10–12°C to effective WBGT, pushing workers past the OEL even in moderate ambient temperatures
- Build acclimatisation programmes for new and returning workers — 7–10 days graded exposure is standard; with increasing global temperatures, review WBGT baselines annually
- At WBGT 27°C (Action Level): buddy systems, supervisor heat-illness training and written rest protocols required — heat stroke can be fatal and constitutes a workplace fatality under the OHSA

Regulation 11 — Illumination PAR = SANS 10114 values

SANS 10114 was previously a design standard only — PAR 2024 raises it to the legal minimum. Cant design to SANS

How Illuminance Drops Over Time (Maintenance Factor / Light Loss Factor)

The drop is quantified by the Maintenance Factor (MF), also called Light Loss Factor (LLF):

$$MF = LLMF \times LMF \times RSMF$$

LLMF — Lamp/LED lumen maintenance (how much the light source itself dims).

LMF — Luminaire maintenance (dirt on the fitting/lens).

RSMF — Room surface maintenance (dirt on walls, ceilings, floors reducing reflections).

Time after installation	Typical total drop (LLMF + dirt)	Resulting illuminance vs. initial
6 months (~2 000–4 000 h)	5–12 %	88–95 % of initial
1 year (~4 000–6 000 h)	8–18 %	82–92 % of initial
2 years (~8 000–12 000 h)	12–25 %	75–88 % of initial

- Phased national electricity increase is 0.5–2% extra consumption over 10–15 years (roughly 1–4 TWh/year)
- Rough annual cost to South Africa (economy-wide, once fully transitioned):
- **R1–5 billion** extra on electricity bills for lighting

FOUR-STEP ILLUMINATION COMPLIANCE PROGRAMME

1

Baseline Assessment

Competent Person lux survey — all work areas vs. Tables 4–7. Install to above minimum to allow for lamp degradation

2

Fix Deficiencies

Upgrade fittings or reposition lights to meet minimum lux levels

3

Flicker & Strobe Check

Assess LED/fluorescent sources — critical in machinery areas

4

Maintenance Programme

Scheduled lamp replacement + annual re-measurement — lux degrades over time; point-in-time compliance is not enough under PAR 2024

Regulation 11 — Illumination: Old vs New Lux Requirements

Most minimum values have doubled — if your lighting meets 1987 standards, it probably needs upgrading

Work Area / Task	Min. Lux 1987	Min. Lux PAR 2024 (SANS 10114)	Change
General office workstations: Computer and business machine operation:	300 lux – escape clause 500 lux	500 lux – no escape clause	▲ Increased
Corridors, stairways, rest areas	50 lux	100 lux	▲ Doubled
Storage / bulk goods	50 lux	100 lux	▲ Doubled
General workrooms (rough work)	100 lux	200 lux	▲ Doubled
Medium assembly / manufacturing	200 lux	300 lux	▲ Increased
General office / clerical	300 lux	300 lux	= Same
Technical drawing / detailed inspection	500 lux	750 lux	▲ Increased
Precision assembly / fine inspection	1 000 lux	1 000–1 500 lux	▲ Increased
Emergency escape routes	0.3 lux (floor)	1 lux (minimum)	▲ Increased
Emergency — safety-critical areas	0.3 lux (floor)	5 lux (minimum)	▲ Increased

🚩 *If your lighting was designed to the 1987 standard (ALL) – reassessment by competent person*

Regulation 11 — Illumination: South Africa vs the World

SA is unique: specific lux values are now criminal law — not advisory guidelines

Jurisdiction	Approach	Emergency lighting?	Specific lux as criminal law?
EU (Directive 89/654/EEC)	General principles — adequate + emergency	Yes (EN 1838)	No
UK (Workplace Regs 1992 + HSG38)	Guidance numbers in HSG38 — advisory only	Yes (BS EN 1838)	No — guidance only
USA (OSHA 29 CFR)	Broad minimums: 5–30 foot-candles by category	General provision	No
Australia (AS/NZS 1680)	Design standard — not criminal minimum	Yes	No
Germany (ASR A3.4)	Technical rule 200–500 lux by type	Yes	No — technical rule
South Africa PAR 2024 ✓	SANS 10114 Tables 4–7 — minimum lux values	Yes — 1/5/20 lux	YES — criminal statute

SA is the only jurisdiction where falling below minimum lux levels is a criminal matter. A documented, maintained lighting compliance programme is no longer optional — it is your legal protection.

Regulation 12 — Indoor Air Quality – Table 3 **Guideline values**

Five parameters now regulated — relevant to every office and commercial building employer

Parameter	PAR 2024 Limit	Monitoring method	Key note
Temperature	20–28°C dry-bulb	Standard thermometer	Comfort range — ASHRAE 55 basis
Air velocity	0.1–0.8 m/s	Hot wire anemometer	Relevant in air-conditioned buildings
Relative humidity	30–60%	Hygrometer	Critical for respiratory conditions
CO ₂	Outdoor ambient + 600 ppm	Non-dispersive IR sensor — continuous preferred	Best proxy for ventilation adequacy
CO (carbon monoxide)	10 mg/m ³ (~8.7 ppm)	Electrochemical sensor	Note: RHCA sets CO OEL at 50 ppm — lower PAR value applies to general workplaces

STEPS FOR ACTION

- Step 1: Baseline IAQ assessment — Competent Person measurement of all five parameters under normal working conditions
- Step 2: Deploy CO₂ continuous loggers — the most practical proxy for ventilation adequacy; prioritise crowded or sealed office environments
- Step 3: RHCA coordination — Reg 12 still requires AIA for HVAC testing; run one coordinated visit to satisfy both frameworks and avoid duplicated cost
- Step 4: Records management — 40-year retention required for all monitoring records under both PAR and RHCA; set up your system now

Regulation 12 — Indoor Air Quality — SANS 10400

Ventilation is a legal requirement – HUGE NEWS

- Ventilation = the controlled movement of air into and out of a workplace to provide **fresh** air and remove airborne contaminants, heat, humidity, odours, or excess carbon dioxide.

⚠️ CRIMINAL LIABILITY DISTINCTION — KNOW WHICH VALUES BIND YOU

- SANS 10400 (air changes per hour + fresh air per person): non-compliance carries criminal liability — these are legally binding minimums under the National Building Regulations
- Table 3 values (temperature, CO₂, CO etc.) are guidelines only — they do NOT carry criminal liability. Do not confuse them with SANS 10400 obligations
- Practical check: verify your building meets SANS 10400 fresh-air-per-person rates first — then use Table 3 CO₂ targets as an ongoing operational benchmark

SANS 10400-O (2011)

Type of occupancy	Minimum outdoor air requirements		Requirement
	Air changes per hour	L/s per person	
Educational buildings			Air supply required per person with required minimum air changes per hour
Classrooms	2	7,5	
Laboratories	2	7,5	
Libraries	2	6,5	

Cat	Indoor Quality	Air	CO ₂ above outdoor air (ppm)	Fresh Air (L/s/person)	Face
IDA1	High		<400	>15	
IDA2	Medium		400-600	10-15	
IDA3	Moderate		600-1000	6-10	
IDA4	Low		>1000	<6	

Regulation 12 — Indoor Air Quality — SANS 10400

Ventilation is a legal requirement – HUGE NEWS

- Ensuring CO₂ = <400ppm above ambient / 800ppm, will prevent airborne flu / COVID
- Monitor for events >15 min where CO₂ dataloggers > 1000ppm

Indoor Air Quality and CO₂ levels and Fresh Air Face delivery (EN 16798)

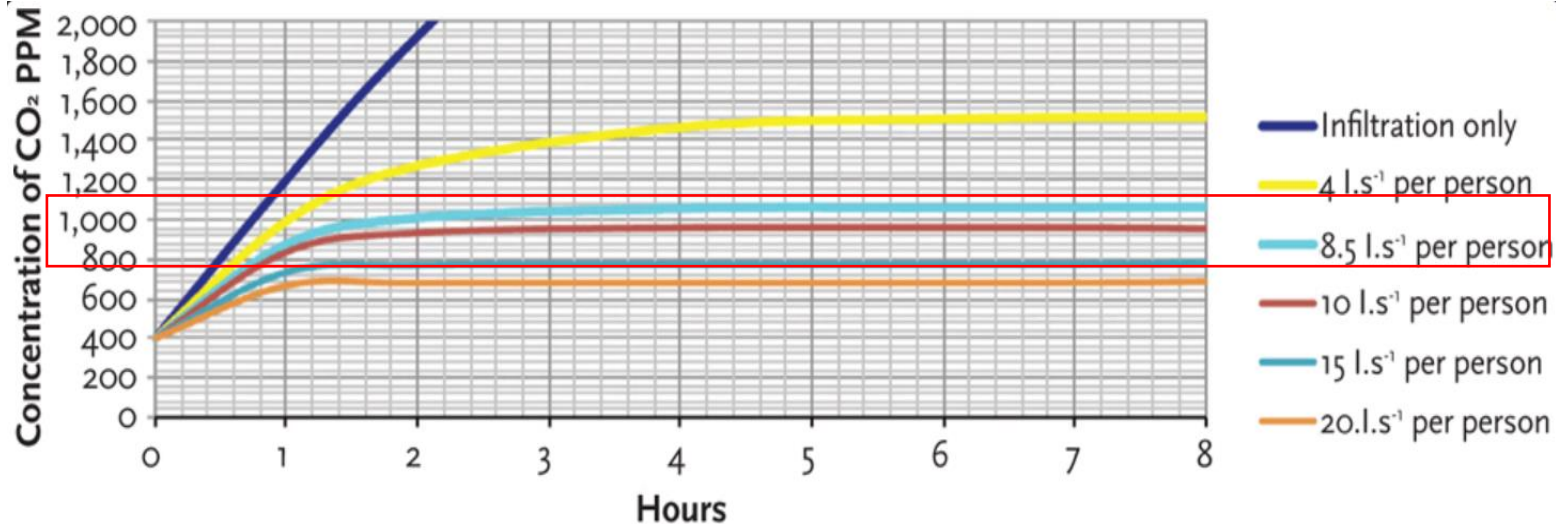


Figure 2: Average room CO₂ levels at various fresh air supply rates for example office with 20 people

Regulation 13 — Vibration

HAV = vibration transmitted into hands and arms from power tools; WBV = vibration through seated/standing body. Both criminally enforced at Action Level AND OEL

Jurisdiction	HAV Action Level	HAV OEL	WBV Action Level	WBV OEL	Legal status
EU Directive 2002/44	2.5 m/s ²	5.0 m/s ²	0.5 m/s ²	1.15 m/s ²	Binding — AL is review trigger
UK (Control of Vib. Regs)	2.5 m/s ²	5.0 m/s ²	0.5 m/s ²	1.15 m/s ²	Legally binding
Australia / Canada / NZ	~2.5 (guidance)	~5.0 (guidance)	0.5 (guidance)	~1.15 (guidance)	Guidance-based
SA PAR 2024 ✓	2.5 m/s ²	5.0 m/s ²	0.5 m/s ²	1.15 m/s ²	CRIMINAL LAW — AL also criminally enforced

EMPLOYER ACTIONS — Vibration

- Highest-risk sectors: manufacturing, construction, mining, forestry (HAV — angle grinders, jack hammers, chainsaws); transport and agriculture (WBV — forklifts, tractors, heavy vehicles) — inventory all tools and drivers
- Calculate trigger time per tool: at 5 m/s² emission (typical angle grinder) **a worker hits the 2.5 m/s² Action Level in ~2.5 hours** — most grinder operators exceed this before lunch
- Engineering controls first: select lower-vibration tools, maintain tools (worn bearings increase HAV significantly), and use vibration-damping tool holders — anti-vibration gloves provide limited protection and are not a substitute
- HAVS screening required at or above the Action Level — early symptoms (tingling, blanching fingers) are reversible; late-stage HAVS is permanent. Engage an OMP now if any workers exceed 2.5 m/s²

Regulation 14 — Non-Ionising Radiation

Full NIR spectrum regulated — focus effort on highest evidence and most common exposures first

NIR Band	Evidence	Common SA sources	Priority
UV-C / UV-A/B (100–400 nm)	Strong — skin cancer, arc eye	Arc welding, UV curing, germicidal lamps, outdoor work	HIGH — start here
Infrared A/B (780 nm–3 µm)	Moderate — burns, cataract	Foundry, glassblowing, furnace and hot metal work	MEDIUM — hot work industries
RF / Microwave (0.1–300 GHz)	Weak for cancer — thermal at high power	Radar, industrial microwave, RF sealing equipment	MEDIUM — high-power sources only
Visible Light (400–780 nm)	Weak — high-intensity industrial only	High-intensity lasers, welding arc	LOW — intense sources only
ELF / SLF (0–100 Hz)	Very weak — no established causal mechanism	Power lines, large motors, induction furnaces	LOW — specific industrial sources

WHERE TO FOCUS BY SECTOR

Welding / manufacturing: UV-C/A/B compliance + exclusion zones + appropriate eye protection

Healthcare / labs: Germicidal UV-C protocols — timers, training, PPE

Mining / heavy industry: Assess induction equipment, large motors and radar for RF/MW

Office / commercial: Normal LED/fluorescent lighting is well within PAR limits — no action needed

KEY TAKE-HOME MESSAGES

What every employer needs to do — and do now

1

September 2026 is your deadline

5 is not far away — it's practically tomorrow once you factor in assessments, procurement and training. Start now.

2

Risk Assessment (Reg 4) comes first

Without it, you cannot prove compliance with anything else. Document it, sign it, date it.

3

Not every stressor will apply to you

If Reg 4 shows no exposure at or above the Action Level, document that — your monitoring obligation is satisfied.

4

Competent Person model is good news

More access, more flexibility — use it. HVAC/ventilation: AIA under RHCA still applies concurrently.

5

Criminal liability is personal

Directors and senior managers are exposed under OHS Act Section 37. Documented compliance is your protection.

6

Medical surveillance follows monitoring

Where monitoring shows exposure at or above Action Level, engage an OMP now.

7

Illumination and IAQ need maintenance

Point-in-time compliance is not enough — lamps degrade, HVAC systems drift. Build maintenance into your system.

8

40-year records retention is law

Plan your document management from day one — risk assessments, monitoring, medical records, all of it.

Practical Compliance Roadmap — ~17 Months to September 2026

A phased approach — starting April 2026, with ~5 months to the deadline

Phase 1: FOUNDATION

- List which of the 9 stressors apply to your operations
- Appoint a Competent Person for each applicable stressor
- Conduct Reg 4 Risk Assessments — sign, date, file
- If exposure < Action Level: document conclusion — monitoring satisfied
- Engage an Occupational Medical Practitioner (OMP)

Phase 2: MEASUREMENT & CONTROLS

- Baseline monitoring for stressors where RA shows possible exposure at AL
- Apply Reg 15 hierarchy of controls — document your choice
- Illumination: lux survey + Tables 4–7 gap analysis + remediation plan
- Vibration: HAV/WBV measurements + tool rotation planning
- Cold/Heat: measure during worst-case season

Phase 3: SURVEILLANCE & SYSTEMS

- Start medical surveillance for workers exposed at or above Action Level
- Set up 40-year records management system
- IAQ: deploy CO₂ continuous monitoring + HVAC baseline (AIA if RHCA applies)
- NIR: source inventory + PPE and exclusion zones in place
- Pre-compliance audit — September 2026 readiness check

QUESTIONS & THANK YOU

Garth Hunter

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Compliance, monitoring, stressor implementation

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Medical surveillance, health impacts, OMP
requirements

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Regulations

KEY REGULATORY REFERENCES

Physical Agents Regulations 2024
GG 52226 / GN 5952 — 6 March 2025

Occupational Health & Safety Act 85 of 1993

Regulations Hazardous Chemical Agents (RHCA)

SANS 7243 — Heat stress measurement

SANS 10114 — Illumination

ISO 5349-1 / ISO 2631-1 — Vibration

ICNIRP 2010/2013/2020 — NIR limits

EU Directive 2002/44/EC — Vibration

EU Directive 2013/35/EU — EMF

ACGIH TLVs — Guidance reference

THANK YOU

H S & E Specialist | Occupational Hygienist
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