

The Noise and Hand-Arm Vibration Programme

Noise has been recognised by HSE as a priority for action and is incorporated in the Noise and Hand-Arm Vibration Programme. Because of the long latency of noise-induced hearing loss the programme will not contribute to the PSA ill-health targets and the objective of the programme to eliminate new cases of hearing loss extends to 2030. The programme is new and is still under development. We plan to formulate and bid for resources for projects including:

- publicity and presentations to raise awareness of the new regulations;
- working with industry, trade unions, local authorities and other stakeholders to reduce exposure and ill-health in areas where there is likely to be greatest impact;
- a focussed preventive inspection and enforcement blitz in 2007/08. We propose to concentrate in 2006/07 on hand-arm vibration, though there will be scope to address noise alongside vibration activities;
- a supply initiative to encourage manufacturers of machines to reduce noise emissions and provide helpful information to users;
- extended provision and use of health surveillance to ensure that early effects are identified and action taken to prevent disability from hearing damage.