



ASSP NORTHEAST FLORIDA CHAPTER NEWSLETTER – JULY 2019

In This Issue:

Safety

Pg. 1 – Bad Vibrations - What workers at risk of whole-body and arm-hand vibration should know

Health

Pg. 4 – What are the health and environmental concerns keeping us up at night?

Workers' Compensation

Pg. 5 - She used a fake name and ID to get the job: Can she get workers' comp?

OSHA News

Pg. 6 - U.S. Department of Labor vs. Kentucky Trucking Company

Miscellaneous

Pg. 7 - Job Market Links

Pg. 7 – ASSP Chapter Links

Pg. 8 - Local Chapter Officers and Chairs

Pg. 8 - Local Chapter

Information

Pg. 8 – Help Wanted

Pg. 8 – Local Meeting

Schedule

Bad Vibrations - What workers at risk of whole-body and arm-hand vibration should know

Operating power tools, vehicles and heavy equipment can take both an immediate and long-term toll on the body.

For millions of workers in the construction, maintenance, mining, forestry, transportation, agriculture and automotive industries, the effects of sustained on-the-job exposure to vibration, whether hand-arm or whole-body, may lead to various health problems.

So, you may ask, what can be done to help prevent this? Please read on.

Hand-arm vibration

Workers exposed to vibration through regular use of power tools are at risk of hand-arm vibration syndrome, which NIOSH calls

“a collective term for vibration-induced neurological, vascular and musculoskeletal disorders in the hand-arm system.”

Tools linked to hand-arm vibration include chain saws, jackhammers, drills, grinders, and riveters. And, the risk exists regardless of whether the tool is powered by electricity, gasoline or air.

Symptoms of hand-arm vibration syndrome (HAVS) include tingling, numbness, pain and discoloration in the fingers; also included is weakened grip from nerve and blood vessel damage.

Thomas McDowell, program assistant coordinator for the NIOSH Health Effects Laboratory Division, said the “blanching,” or discoloration, typically starts in the tips of one or two fingers and can spread to other fingers and even the opposite hand.

A hallmark disorder of HAVS is vibration white finger,



also known as Raynaud's syndrome. The syndrome is an irreversible, potentially disabling condition that arises when repeated vibration exposure causes the blood vessels in the affected fingers to collapse.

"Prevention is the key," McDowell said. "Once the worker starts exhibiting symptoms, you've already gone past the point of no return. If employers can become aware of the disease and its development, then they can be cognizant of providing warm and dry work environments and seeing about eliminating the need for workers to operate a handheld power tool in the first place."

OSHA offers several tips for reducing the risk of HAVS. Among them are:

- Use damping techniques or vibration isolators on equipment.
- Keep machines and tools in proper working order.

- Alternate between vibrating and non-vibrating tools.
- Allow workers to take 10- to- 15-minute breaks each hour.
- Educate workers on vibration hazards and best practices for limiting exposure.
- Advise workers to keep their hands warm and dry and to grip tools lightly.

Alice Turcot, occupational health researcher at the National Public Health Institute of Quebec, adds that "If you're not aware that vibrations can cause these disorders, then it's very difficult to implement prevention." "So the first step is to give the proper information that vibration is an occupational risk factor."

Whole-body vibration

Bumpy roads, uneven terrain, potholes and even choppy waves at sea are common contributors to whole-body vibration. When a truck, tractor, ship, etc., traverses these or other

obstacles, vibrations transfer through the vehicle and its seat to the operator's pelvis and lumbar spine. Repeated exposure impacts the spinal discs, and accumulated vibrations can add up – possibly triggering lower back pain and other musculoskeletal disorders.

"Any sort of equipment where an operator is in a seated position has the potential to impart mechanical vibration that could be problematic," said Nathan Fethke, associate professor of occupational and environmental health in the College of Public Health at the University of Iowa.

According to experts, it takes years of persistent exposure for tissue damage to become apparent. And complicating the issue is the fact that whole-body vibration damage is often mistaken for other common work-related ailments. For example, does a truck driver's bad back stem from steady vibration exposure and/or



years of lifting cargo? It could be either, or both.

Although air ride seats are a popular measure to protect vehicle operators from whole-body vibration, some experts also point to advancements in seat suspension systems.

Speaking during a recent webinar on vehicle seat design, Peter Johnson, professor in the occupational and environmental exposure sciences program at the University of Washington, said air ride seats, although effective, may present challenges when drivers encounter bumps at moderate to high speeds. A bump amplifies the vibration when the seat strays from its ideal trajectory.

Various active seat suspension systems, although often “fairly expensive in a price-sensitive industry,” Johnson said, include components that can help attenuate more vibration and reduce the effects, such as swaying and side tipping.

Using an air suspension system similar to that of a conventional truck seat, the new seats also include technology that processes data from a sensor in the seat base to cancel forces in real time.

David Wilder, professor in the department of biomedical engineering at the University of Iowa, says “That’s very encouraging.” He continues by adding that “People have been dreaming about this for decades, and it’s only been within the past 20 years or so that the electronics and the controls for doing this have gotten good enough to do it well. So that can smooth out the ride quite a bit.”

Standard issue

The European Union has established action level regulatory standards for vibration over an 8-hour, time-weighted average, defined as that above which the risk of health effects increase.

Although OSHA doesn’t enforce any such standards,

various consensus standards related to vibration, including those from the American National Standards Institute and the International Organization for Standardization, are similar to EU regulations. Threshold limits from the American Conference of Governmental Industrial Hygienists also closely follow ISO 2631-1 (whole-body) and ISO 5349 (hand-arm), and the fundamentals of measuring vibration via frequency weighting in the United States are similar to the EU’s, Fethke said.

“These are consensus standards, and so there’s no requirement to adhere to them,” Fethke said. “But in my experience, organizations that do have individuals exposed to whole-body and hand-arm vibrations pay attention to those.”

McDowell acknowledged that there is a conundrum that stems from the lack of vibration regulatory standards in the United States, but said



that EU standards influence American workers nonetheless.

In addition to employers addressing worker protections on their own, McDowell said some tool manufacturers have responded as well. For instance, a vibrating tool sold in Europe must meet EU regulations, and manufacturers aren't likely to make what McDowell calls "good" and "bad" sets for either side of the Atlantic Ocean.

"The United States is going to benefit from these standards being applied in other countries," McDowell said. "It's not like we're not being protected at all. So as these tools improve, Americans are going to get the benefits of using these improved tools as well."

Safety and Health Magazine
Online Edition
May 26, 2019
[Safety and Health Magazine](#)

What are the health and environmental concerns keeping us up at night?

According to a recent, nationwide survey by [SafeWise](#), what Americans fear most in terms of health and wellness is not necessarily what is currently posing the most danger to them. In [The State of Safety](#), a report based on the results of the survey, the independent review site found that falls (non-work related) are the biggest health and wellness concern, while an [accidental](#) overdose is way down on the list, coming in at number nine for both men and women.

Falls (non-work related) kill 72 people a year in the U.S., while opioids claim 130 American lives each and every day of the year.

Here are what those surveyed identified as their top health and wellness fears:

Men

- Falling - 42%
- CO poisoning - 33%
- Fires or burns - 30%
- Choking or suffocating - 29%
- [Toxins](#): lead, mold, etc. - 29%
- Falling objects - 28%
- Poisoning: cleaning supplies - 25%
- Drowning - 25%
- Overdose: prescription drugs - 24%
- Poisoning: drugs or alcohol - 24%

Women

- Falling - 47%
- CO poisoning - 38%
- Fires or burns - 35%
- Choking or suffocating - 33%
- Toxins: lead, mold, etc. - 34%
- Falling objects - 32%
- Poisoning: cleaning supplies - 26%
- Drowning - 24%
- Overdose: prescription drugs - 24%
- Poisoning: drugs or alcohol - 25%



Climate change is a big environmental concern

When it comes to environmental safety, [climate change](#) was front and center in the minds of survey respondents. Although it wasn't included in the study, it was mentioned the most in open-ended questions, with 17% calling it out by name and 8% expressing concern about taking care of the environment.

In the past year, 19% of all respondents experienced an environmental safety issue.

Proximity to danger doesn't matter when it comes to environmental worries. Many landlocked states were just as concerned about tsunamis as coastal ones.

Here are the top environmental hazards mentioned:

Men

- Poor air quality - 51%
- Water quality - 50%
- Floods - 40%
- Tornados - 39%
- Forest fires - 32%
- Earthquakes - 28%

- Animal attacks - 27%
- Tsunamis - 22%
- Mudslides and landslides - 20%
- Volcanic eruptions - 19%

Female

- Poor air quality - 57%
- Water quality - 53%
- Floods - 48%
- Tornados - 42%
- Forest fires - 35%
- Earthquakes - 34%
- Animal attacks - 28%
- Tsunamis - 21%
- Mudslides and landslides - 23%
- Volcanic eruptions - 19%

Industrial Safety and Hygiene News

Online Edition
April 18, 2019

[ISHN](#)

She used a fake name and ID to get the job: Can she get workers' comp?

Does using a fake name and ID prevent an injured employee from obtaining workers' compensation benefits? Please read on to find out.

Leticia Mera-Hernandez worked as a custodian for Unified School District 233 (U.S.D. 233) in Kansas. She had been hired using her real name in 2000 and again in 2003. However, when she applied to the district for the third time in 2009, she used a false name, Hilda Reina, and provided false identification.

In March 2012, she injured her back while moving furniture. U.S.D. 233 initially paid for Mera-Hernandez's medical treatment and she returned to work. However, she continued to have pain and sought additional treatment. When U.S.D. 233 denied further benefits, Mera-Hernandez filed a workers' comp claim using her real name. After finding she used a false name, U.S.D. 233 discharged her.

The school district argued Mera-Hernandez didn't have a valid employment contract because she lied when she applied.

An administrative law judge found that, despite the



false ID papers, an employment relationship did exist; further, Mera-Hernandez should continue to receive comp benefits. The Kansas Workers' Compensation Board affirmed the decision, as did a panel of the state Court of Appeals.

Recently, the Kansas Supreme Court reviewed the case. The state's highest court noted that under its workers' comp law, the definition of employee is, "any person who has entered into the employment of or works under any contract or service or apprenticeship with an employer." Mera-Hernandez did the work she was hired for, and U.S.D. 233 paid her for it. The court said that fit the comp law's broad definition of an employee.

There is also precedent in Kansas for refusing to void an employment contract for misrepresentation during the hiring process.

In a previous case, an employee "made a number of misrepresentations" about

previous injuries and his overall physical condition. The Kansas Supreme Court found the misrepresentations didn't void the employment contract.

Also, even if the employment contract was made void, workers' comp would still cover the injured employee as long as the misrepresentation didn't lead to the injury.

Also in 2013, the Kansas Supreme Court refused to deny workers' comp benefits based on immigration status.

That wasn't the argument being made in Mera-Hernandez's case. Nevertheless, for the benefit of employers, the court summed up the situation this way:

"The definition of 'employee' does not require that the employment, contract of service, or apprenticeship involve a legal relationship or that the persons involved possess the requisite documentation to

legally work within the United States."

The Kansas Supreme Court upheld the ruling that Mera-Hernandez should receive workers' comp medical coverage for her injuries.

Safety News Alert

Online Edition

April 7, 2017

[Safety News Alert](#)

U.S. Department of Labor Orders Kentucky Trucking Company to Reinstate Driver Who Refused To Operate Vehicle During Inclement Weather

FLORENCE, KY – The U.S. Department of Labor's Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) has ordered Freight Rite Inc., based in Florence, Kentucky, to reinstate a truck driver terminated after he refused to operate a commercial motor vehicle in hazardous road conditions caused by inclement winter weather.



OSHA ordered the company to pay the driver \$31,569 in back wages and interest, \$100,000 in punitive damages, \$50,000 in compensatory damages, and reasonable attorney fees, and to refrain from retaliating against the employee.

OSHA inspectors determined that the employee advised the company's management of his reasonable apprehension of danger to himself and to the general public due to the hazardous road conditions. The termination is a violation of the [Surface Transportation Assistance Act \(STAA\)](#).

In addition to reinstating the employee and clearing his personnel file of any reference to the issues involved in the investigation, the employer must also post a notice informing all employees of their whistleblower protections under STAA.

"Forcing drivers to operate a commercial motor vehicle during inclement weather

places their lives and the lives of others at risk," said OSHA Regional Administrator Kurt Petermeyer, in Atlanta, Georgia. "This order underscores the agency's commitment to protect workers who exercise their right to ensure the safety of themselves and the general public."

OSHA enforces the whistleblower provisions of STAA and [21 other statutes](#) protecting employees who report violations of various airline, commercial motor carrier, consumer product, environmental, financial reform, food safety, motor vehicle safety, healthcare reform, nuclear, pipeline, public transportation agency, railroad, maritime, and securities laws. For more information on whistleblower protections, visit OSHA's [Whistleblower Protection Programs webpage](#).

Under the [Occupational Safety and Health Act](#),

employers are responsible for providing safe and healthful workplaces for their employees. OSHA's role is to help ensure these conditions for America's working men and women by setting and enforcing standards, and providing training, education and assistance. For more information, please visit <http://www.osha.gov>.

OSHA News Release – Region 4

June 28, 2019

[OSHA News Release](#)

Job Market Links

General Employment Links

[ASSP](#)

[BCSP General Safety Jobs](#)

[BCSP Construction Safety Jobs](#)

[BCSP Industrial Hygiene Jobs](#)

[EHS Careers](#)

ASSP Chapter Links

Find us on the web at:

[ASSP NFL](#)

Find us on Facebook at:

[ASSP NFL](#)



Local Chapter Officers and Chairs

Elected Officers

- President - Steve Brown
- President Elect - Bob Dooley
- Secretary - Steve Wilson
- Treasurer - Yaniv Zagagi
- Delegate - Dave Bedsole

Appointed Chairs

- Membership Chair - Eric Gray
- Newsletter Chair – Bob Dooley
- Nominations Chair – Dan Hemsall
- Past President - Dan Hemsall
- Program Chair - Tom Drygas
- Social Chair – Ravyn Tyler
- Social Media Chair - Vernon Adams
- SPY Awards Chair – Open

Local Chapter Information

The North Florida Chapter
of the American Society of

Safety Professionals, formerly the American Society of Safety Engineers, was chartered in 1952 and currently has more than 165 members.

Professional meetings are held nine times per year in the Jacksonville area.

Meeting notices are distributed and RSVP's are returned by email. If you are a member of ASSP and are not receiving notices by email, please email the [Chapter Secretary](#).

Help Wanted – We Need Leadership Volunteers

If you are interested and able to devote time to the local chapter, please contact [Dan Hemsall](#) (Nominations Chair) or [Steve Brown](#) (President) for details. We believe that you will enjoy the experience and comradery and we most-

certainly appreciate your help.

Local Chapter Meeting Schedule

The chapter is currently in recess for the summer.