



PRESS RELEASE
October 8 2007

Industry partnership addressing Hand Arm Vibration

Key members of the construction industry have come together to provide users of hand-held electric power tools with information which will help control their exposure to hand arm vibration.

The partnership between contractors, manufacturers and suppliers has resulted in a joint statement of co-operation between Hand Arm Vibration Test Centre (HAVTEC) with Loughborough University, and the European Power Tool Association (EPTA) which agrees to the:

- Continuation and development of the HAVTEC database as the common and freely available website for the industry
- Publication of tool test data in compliance with manufacturers' legal obligations under the supply of machinery regulations
- Provision of exposure information which will enable the user to fully comply with health and safety legislation
- Development of a 'traffic light system' for each tool giving exposure detail based on the duration of usage and type of material worked on
- Production of training materials and best practice guidance

Now, users of hand-held electrical power tools will have accurate and detailed real life exposure data for new tools such as combi-hammers, breakers, saws etc. It will enable them to identify which tools they should use, for how long and on which material in order to control exposure to hand arm vibration.

Majors Contractors Group (MCG) members welcome this agreement as it continues to support their policy to use only those hand-held power tools which are listed on the HAVTEC Database from January 2007. All those involved in the supply and use of such tools are urged to access the free information from www.operc.com.

Mark Owen, a member of the MCG Health & Safety Working Group and Head of Health and Safety at Shepherd Construction, said: "Our intention is to ensure that everyone, without exception, has access to good freely available HAV information in order to make considered judgements on the procurement and use of power tools. The HAVTEC database delivers the information required to make these decisions sensibly and ultimately gives any employer the opportunity to offer good protection for their workforce. I am delighted that EPTA has given its full support to HAVTEC"

Bo Risberg (President of EPTA and CEO of Hilti), Gerry McHugh (Vice President of EPTA and Managing Director of Hitachi Koki, Europe) and Brian Cooke (Director General of EPTA) agreed: "We are very pleased to have reached this agreement, as it will assist us greatly in our relationships with our customers in the construction and hire industry. We look forward to working closely with all those involved for the benefit of our customers and end users".

Dr David J. Edwards, Loughborough University said: “We are satisfied that the new standard for assessment of HAV relating to operation of hand-held electric power tools, provides a useful first approximation of the risk posed to operators from HAV. We are delighted that EPTA members are now working in partnership with the Major Contractors Group, the Major Hire Companies Group and the Off-highway Plant and Equipment Research Centre, to support the HAVTEC initiative which is based at Loughborough University. Such partnership will ensure the ongoing success of HAVTEC and provide a greater service to industry.”

Mark Turnbull, Health and Safety Director, Speedy Hire said: “I am delighted that agreement has been reached, particularly in respect of a common database. What this means going forward is that the Hire Industry will be able to provide its customers with reliable data, in a uniform manner with the minimum of confusion. EPTA have paved the way and I hope that other manufacturing groups will follow suit.”

Notes to Editors:

1. Breakdown of information of each constituent organisation:

MCG

The Major Contractors Group (MCG) represents the UK’s largest construction companies, each with an annual turnover in excess of £300 million. MCG members carry out over £20 billion worth of construction work each year.

Construction Confederation

The MCG is a member of the Construction Confederation, the main representative umbrella organisation for building and civil engineering trade federations within the UK construction industry.

EPTA

The European Power Tool Association (EPTA) was formed in 1984 to represent the interests of European power tool manufacturers. A list of member companies is available on the EPTA website (www.epta.eu). Together EPTA members employ about 17000 people in Europe and represent the majority of the European power tool business by value

HAVTEC/OPERC

HAVTEC is the vibration testing facility based at Loughborough University. It provides independent assessment of the hand-arm vibration (HAV) exposure that an operator will be exposed to from the use of mechanical hand-held power tools. The results of the tests are recorded on the HAVTEC register, which is made available through the OPERC website.

2. Since January 2007 it has been the policy of members of the MCG to use only those tools listed in the HAVTEC database.
3. HSE figures state that Hand Arm Vibration affects 36,000 people in the construction industry. Those working in the industry twice as likely to suffer hand arm vibration than any other worker. HSE statistics 2005/06.
4. The full statement can be viewed at www.mcg.org.uk
5. Further information from Kurt Calder on 0207 227 4508