Vibration from power tools such as chainsaws, grinders, jack hammers, sorting conveyors, drill motors, crushers, chippers, mowers and other equipment can cause serious injury to your hands when used over long periods of time. Workers in construction, shipyards, manufacturing, forestry, agriculture & food processing, stone cutters, and others are exposed to vibration by the tools they use.

Symptoms start with occasional tingling or numbness in the fingers which can progress to painful spasms of the hand which last anywhere from a few minutes to an hour. There can be a whitish coloration of the fingers, known as “finger blanching”. This affliction is known as Vibration White Finger Syndrome (VWF) or sometimes referred to as Hand-Arm Vibration Syndrome or HAVS.

As the condition progresses, the hands become weak, less sensitive to temperature, and make simple tasks like putting a nut on a bolt, or trying to hold a screw or small part difficult. As the disease progresses, victims are often forced to reduce or eliminate activities at work and at home. Extreme cases have been known to result in gangrene of the fingertips requiring amputation.

Vibration is the cause of this disease. If the hand is subjected to repeated vibrations over long periods of time, it damages the blood vessels and interferes with the flow of blood to the fingers. This deprives the skin and muscles of oxygen which causes them to eventually die. Contributing factors that can accelerate this process include smoking and cold - both of which cause blood vessels to constrict, further impairing blood flow.

Factors that determine the development of HAVS include the intensity of the vibration, how tight the user grips the tool, how long the tool is used each day and how many months or years the tool is continuously used. It appears that several hours of daily exposure over a period of months or years is required before the first symptoms appear. This is a progressive disease that can be reversed if corrective action is taken when symptoms are first recognized. Once it becomes permanent there is no cure, only medication which partially relieves the pain.

Some things that you can do to keep from developing this disease are:
1. Stop smoking if you haven't already.
2. If you work outdoors in the cold, wear warm gloves to protect your hands and fingers.
3. Let the tool do the work, grasping it as lightly as possible while still maintaining control. As much as possible, avoid awkward positions such as forcing the wrist forward.
4. Consider using anti-vibration gloves which help dissipate the vibration over a much larger area of the hand. Gloves are also available that aid in gripping a tool so the worker can hold the tool without having to grip it so tightly.
5. If you can, periodically change the tool to your other hand, or consider using a non-vibrating tool if feasible.
6. Rotate the task among several members of the crew to reduce individual exposure.

Remember: HAVS is not reversible but is preventable. If you have tingling or numbness in your hands or fingers, try some of the prevention measures listed above.
SAFETY MEETING AGENDA

DEPARTMENT/JOB SITE: ___________________________ MEETING DATE: ___________________________

1. **Open Meeting & Present safety topic:** _______________________________________________________ 
2. Read minutes from previous meeting.
3. **Persons present:**
   
   __________________________________________  __________________________________________
   __________________________________________  __________________________________________
   __________________________________________  __________________________________________
   __________________________________________  __________________________________________
   __________________________________________  __________________________________________
   __________________________________________  __________________________________________

4. **Old Business** – Status of previous recommendations. Discuss pending old business if any.

5. **Accidents** – Discuss accidents and near misses that have occurred since the last meeting. Brief summary of accidents to date by number and type. Note any trends. Discuss corrective action taken, or needed. Concentrate on accident causes to make everyone more aware.

6. **Inspection Reports** – Report on findings and recommendations of any inspection reports made since last meeting.

7. **New Business** – Solicit employee suggestions. Discuss new procedures, changes to company safety policy, etc.

TIME MEETING STARTED: ___________________________ TIME FINISHED: ___________________________

MEETING CHAIED BY: ___________________________ TITLE: ___________________________