

A P P U N T I D I M E T O D O

La Direttiva europea 2002/44/CE sulla protezione dei lavoratori contro i rischi da vibrazioni meccaniche

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KEY WORDS

European directive; mechanical vibration; risk assessment; exposure limit values and action values; health surveillance

SUMMARY

«The European Directive 2002/44/CE on the protection of workers against risks arising from mechanical vibration». This paper provides comments on the European Directive 2002/44/CE of 25 June 2002 on the minimum health and safety requirements regarding the exposure of workers to the risks arising from physical agents (vibration) (sixteenth individual Directive according to Article 16(1) of Directive 89/291/EEC). The European Directive on mechanical vibration was published in the Official Journal of the European Communities L 177/13 on 6 July 2002. The Directive includes the definitions of hand-arm vibration and whole-body vibration, establishes the daily exposure limit values and action values for mechanical vibration, and gives provisions related to (i) determination and assessment of risks, (ii) measures aimed at avoiding or reducing exposure, (iii) information, training, consultation and participation of workers, (iv) health surveillance of the exposed workers, and (v) derogations and transitional periods for the implementation of the obligations of employers when the daily exposure limit values are exceeded. The author discusses the strong link which exists between the assessment of risk due to vibration exposure at the workplace and the health surveillance of the exposed workers. The occupational health physician, as a specialist with expertise in human factors and in the early detection of vibration-related adverse health effects, will have an important role in the assessment of risks arising from mechanical vibration in order to implement an effective health surveillance of the exposed workers. The Member States must bring into force the requirements of the Directive no later than 6 July 2005.

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