

The Vibration Directive 2002/44/EC

Cost to local government to re-fit machinery - £22 million ([Click Green](#))

Costs to private businesses - £60 million from compensation claims ([New Civil Engineer](#))

Talking Points

Council tax increases

When the directive comes into full force in 2010, the directive will regulate all machinery in the workplace. The provisions of the directive will force local councils to either remove speed humps, fix potholes (which they should anyway) and re-design refuse collection vehicles. This will be an additional cost to councils at a time when they face spending squeezes.

Regulation goes too far

The regulation limits the amount of time bin lorries can collect refuse. This will have a negative impact on the working practices of those not most at risk from whole body and hand-arm vibration.

Burdensome

The costs to small businesses to comply with the directive (monitoring vibration, buying new machinery or amending the working environment) will threaten their sustainability.

What is it?

A directive aimed to eliminate damage from 'hand-arm' and 'whole body vibration' at work for those who use land, sea and aircraft vehicles. The scope of the directive, in full force from 2010, extends as far as lorries for refuse collection, driving over speed bumps and pot holes. The original directive drafts limited driving a tractor, dump truck or bulldozer will to 2 hours and the use of lorries to 5 hours.

Employers must ensure they undertake appropriate risk assessments, mitigate exposure to whole body vibration and ensure specific working conditions (i.e. lower temperatures) suitable for work with limited vibration.

Employers must also ensure they monitor those at greatest risk from whole body vibration and back related pain.

If the limits for vibrations are exceeded, the employer must undertake a series of measures, including:

- Information and training
- Road maintenance
- Providing ergonomic equipment to minimise body and arm vibration
- Re-design of workplace environment and equipment
- Re-organise working times and practices to limit exposure to vibration
- New work clothing to minimise vibration
- Health monitoring of employees

Third Party Opinions

"Power tool manufacturer Hilti said consultants were unaware that the UK's adoption of a European Directive this July will make them responsible for controlling the spread of a condition that already affects about 2M people in the UK." Power tool manufacturer Hilti quoted in [New Civil Engineer](#).

"The levels of vibration that this directive will criminalise are less than those we experience every day when walking and running." Gary Booton, health and safety manager at the Engineering Employers Federation, quoted in the [Telegraph](#) 25 October 2001.