

Need further help?

At Stephenson's, we have an experienced team specialising in all kinds of workplace injuries and diseases. This includes asbestosis, vibration white finger, hearing losses, asthma and skin complaints, and chronic diseases of the lung and respiratory systems.

In many cases, the complaints from which our clients suffer are the result of many years' working in a harmful environment. In order to pursue your claim successfully, we draw on our expertise in all areas of employment law, and health and safety issues. We also have access to the best medical experts in the country to review and assess your case.

If you think you might have a claim and want to find out more, please contact us on 01942 777777. We will be happy to talk to you and provide further information, including discussing your funding options, without obligation. All our funding arrangements are designed to ensure that you keep every penny you are awarded. There are no introductory fees, no loans and no deduction from your compensation.

We believe the information contained within this leaflet to be correct at the time of publication. While all possible care is taken in producing this leaflet, no responsibility for loss can be accepted by the firm, however caused.

About Stephenson's

Stephenson's provides legal advice for all aspects of your personal or business life. By understanding your circumstances and keeping the red-tape to ourselves, we focus on efficiently delivering what you need, when you need it. Operating from a number of regional locations, we rank among the top 100 UK law firms and are one of the fastest growing practices in the north west. With over 300 staff, you can trust our specialists to take care of things on your behalf, always putting your best interests first. So, for legal advice and action the way you want it, just turn to Stephenson's.

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Medical complaints from hand-held power tools

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Hand-Arm vibration

The use of hand-held vibrating power tools is common in many industries, particularly construction and manufacturing. Persistent and excessive use of such equipment, however, can lead to a range of painful medical conditions affecting the hands, wrists and fingers. This includes Vibration White Finger, which causes severe pain in the fingers and Carpal Tunnel Syndrome, a nerve disorder affecting the hand.

Are you affected?

According to the HSE, around two million employees in the UK are regularly exposed to potentially damaging levels of hand-arm vibration in the workplace. You may be affected if you experience any of the following:

- Your fingertips go white
- You have tingling or numbness in your fingers or hands
- You find it difficult to feel things with your fingers
- You lose strength in your hands, making it difficult to hold heavier items

Your employer has a duty to provide a safe working environment. However, until recently, many employers have failed to fully appreciate the medical problems associated with vibrating power tools. Nor have they taken sufficient steps to prevent workers from harm. This leaflet explains the steps you can take if you find yourself in this situation.

Are you at risk?

You are at risk if you regularly use at work hand-held vibrating power tools such as:

- Jack hammers
- Impact wrenches
- Jigger picks
- Angle grinders
- Whacker plates
- Pneumatic drills
- Riveting tools
- Gas powered chainsaws

This list is by no means exhaustive. There are many more tools which can cause a gradual injury to your hand or arms due to regular and consistent use.

Prevention is better than cure

The symptoms of hand-arm vibration can improve somewhat if you stop using power tools. But in many cases once the damage is done it is unfortunately permanent. However, there are many steps you can take yourself to protect yourself in the workplace.

If you are suffering from hand-arm vibration and are still using vibrating tools, the first thing to do is to speak to your employer. Ideally you should be seeking not to use such tools, or at least reducing the time you use them and having frequent breaks. You may even want to consider changing roles. If it is not possible to stop using vibrating tools, you should make sure that the tools that you do use are always sharp and effective.

If your symptoms persist, you may wish to seek medical advice. And, if you think work is to blame, you may want to take legal advice. You may be entitled to compensation for your injury.