

THE PROVISION & USE OF WORK EQUIPMENT

REGULATIONS (PUWER) 1998

Problem: Employers, employees and the self-employed have statutory duties to ensure the safe use of work equipment.

Purpose: To give all employees a basic understanding of the statutory duties within PUWER.

Overview: This talk covers the statutory duties under PUWER'98

What is Work Equipment?

The scope of 'work equipment' is extremely wide. It covers almost any equipment used at work, including:-

- Hand tools
- Power tools
- Mobile Plant and Equipment
- Office equipment
- Installed manufacturing process equipment.
- Scaffolding (Except where covered in greater detail in the Construction (Health, Safety & Welfare) Regulations 1996)
- Etc. etc...

Suitability of Work Equipment

- Work equipment selected must be suitable for the purpose or intended use.
- An assessment must be made of the working conditions considering any risks to health and safety of the users or others whom may be affected by the work equipment.
- Work equipment must be used for the purpose it was designed.
- Any assessment of work equipment must consider the human ergonomics. This means the design is compatible with normal human dimensions.

Maintenance & Inspection

- Work equipment must be maintained in efficient working order and good repair.
- Any machinery must have a maintenance log and that it is kept up to date.
- Where the safety of work equipment is dependent upon correct installation, it must be inspected: -
- After installation and before being taken into use for the first time.
- After assembling in a new location.
- At suitable intervals.
- After any event liable to jeopardise health and safety.
- Certain pieces of legislation, manufacturer instructions and risk assessment should identify maintenance and inspection requirements.
- Maintenance and inspection should only be carried out by 'competent persons' who have been appointed by management to do so.
- Records of inspection should be kept.

Appointed Persons for Specific Risk

- The use of work equipment that involves a specific risk to health and safety shall be restricted to appointed persons only.
- Appointed persons must demonstrate competence and be appointed by their Supervisor.

Example

- Forklift trucks only operated by appointed Operators who have received training and holds a current licence.

Information & Instruction

- All work equipment shall have available: -
- Adequate health and safety information
- Appropriate written instructions
- Managers & Supervisors must have the necessary information and instruction available to them, for the work equipment under their control.

Training

- Employees who use work equipment must have received the appropriate training.
- Manager and Supervisors who control the use of work equipment must have received the appropriate training.

CE Conformity

- All work equipment must comply with the relevant European Standard for conformity.

Guarding Dangerous Parts

- Regulation 11 of PUWER covers the requirements to prevent injury from dangerous moving parts of machinery. These include preventing access, means of emergency stop and a hierarchy of controls for guarding.
- The 'hierarchy of controls' consists of: -
 - a) Fixed Guard (Fencing)
 - b) Other Guards (Automatic guards, Interlocked guards, Adjustable guards etc.)
 - c) Protective devices (Trip switches and pressure sensors)
 - d) Protection Appliances (Push sticks)
 - e) Provision of information, instruction, training and supervision.

