

Anti-vibration Tools and Regulations

We've all heard of white finger/thumb and the dangers is posed to miners (in fact it still poses threats, just we don't hear so much about them these days I guess) or do we? Recent government findings show that 'frequently vibrating tools' such as handheld powered grinders and saws are capable of causing permanent damage to users. Now while this isn't a threat to your once every so often DIY enthusiast, the story could be very different for an operative working 8 hour shifts primarily using a drill.

One manufacturer taking this threat very seriously indeed is Hitachi Powertools and I was lucky enough to be invited along to a presentation from Hitachi on their new range of low vibration power tools. From the outset, the focus was on anti vibration and we were given an impressive enough show backed up by some of Hitachi's engineers (flown especially in) and the MD of Hitachi was also there to greet us.

Four different Manufacturers were compared and we were allowed to test-drive the new range ourselves. I was interested to see the performance particularly against the comparable Bosch and DeWalt products for the SDS Plus but it was a shame that Hitachi had decided NOT to include any DeWalt tools in the match-off. That aside, the Hitachi SDS was well balanced and felt good - was there a great difference in vibration though?

It's very hard to judge on just a couple of tests but there was a definite difference between the Bosch and the Hitachi although the Bosch did have an overall more solid feel to it. In fairness it's probably just a case of getting used to the new feel of the anti-vibration handle. Would I want to get used to it? Probably if I had my way I would still choose the Bosch SDS over the Hitachi (I do have some brand loyalty with the Bosch, although I've done my best to keep that at bay!), but do I have my way? Current legislation (and there's more to come) shows that vibrations are on the top of the list as regards to working conditions so the only choice for power tools may end up being those that adopt anti-vibration systems.

As for white finger law-suits, we'll have to see what happens in the coming months.

It just goes to show that all vibrations may not be 'good vibrations'.

Source: <http://www.articlecircle.com>

About the Author

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