



Whole body vibration

Employee briefing



Risks

Workers regularly driving or riding on off-road mobile machinery, agricultural vehicles or industrial trucks are at risk of causing or aggravating back pain.

Back pain can be caused by many work and non-work activities but mobile machine operators and drivers (especially those who work off-road) are at increased risk from back pain. Back pain may be made worse by driving for a long time in a poorly adjusted seat, jolting and jarring from rough ground (whole-body vibration) and by manual handling.

What can be done to reduce the risks

You can help avoid back pain if you do the following:

- Check that the machine allocated to you is large enough and powerful enough for the job you have to do and the conditions in which it will have to operate. Discuss with your supervisor if you are unsure.
- Check that the machine has been correctly maintained and any faults repaired (e.g. a broken suspension seat or defective brakes, steering linkages and suspension components) and that tyre pressures are correct.
- Report any faults with the vehicle or other problems with the job.
- Adjust the seat so that you are comfortable, and it supports your lower back and so you can see clearly without having to stretch, twist or lean.
- Make sure you can operate the controls without stretching, twisting or leaning.
- If your seat has a driver's weight adjustment, make sure it is adjusted correctly for your weight.
- Choose routes avoiding rough surfaces and, if this is not possible, drive more slowly to avoid bumping and jolting.
- Keep the ground on worksites where the machine is working or travelling in good condition. Remove any large rocks or obstacles and fill in any ditches and holes.



- Steer, brake, accelerate, shift gears and operate any attachments, e.g. excavator buckets, smoothly.
- Avoid bad postures, e.g. slumping in your seat, constantly leaning forward or sideways or driving with your back twisted.
- Take regular breaks if you can, to avoid sitting in the same position for too long.
- Don't jump off the vehicle or make other awkward movements that could jar your back.
- Avoid lifting and carrying awkward or heavy loads.
- Report any back pain you have.
- Co-operate with your employer by following health and safety instructions and training. Reporting any concerns about your health or the equipment you use to your manager.

If you get back pain

Avoid any activities which aggravate back pain but stay active, as back pain is rarely serious. Try simple pain relief to help with the pain but see your doctor if you are worried, or if the pain persists or suddenly gets worse