MAGB HEALTH, SAFETY & ENVIRONMENT GROUP

OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH

SCOPE: *This document represents best practice advice available and considered pertinent after consultation within the membership and incorporating external advice. It is intended as a set of guidelines for consideration in developing a procedure to recognise and manage stress.*

1. INTRODUCTION

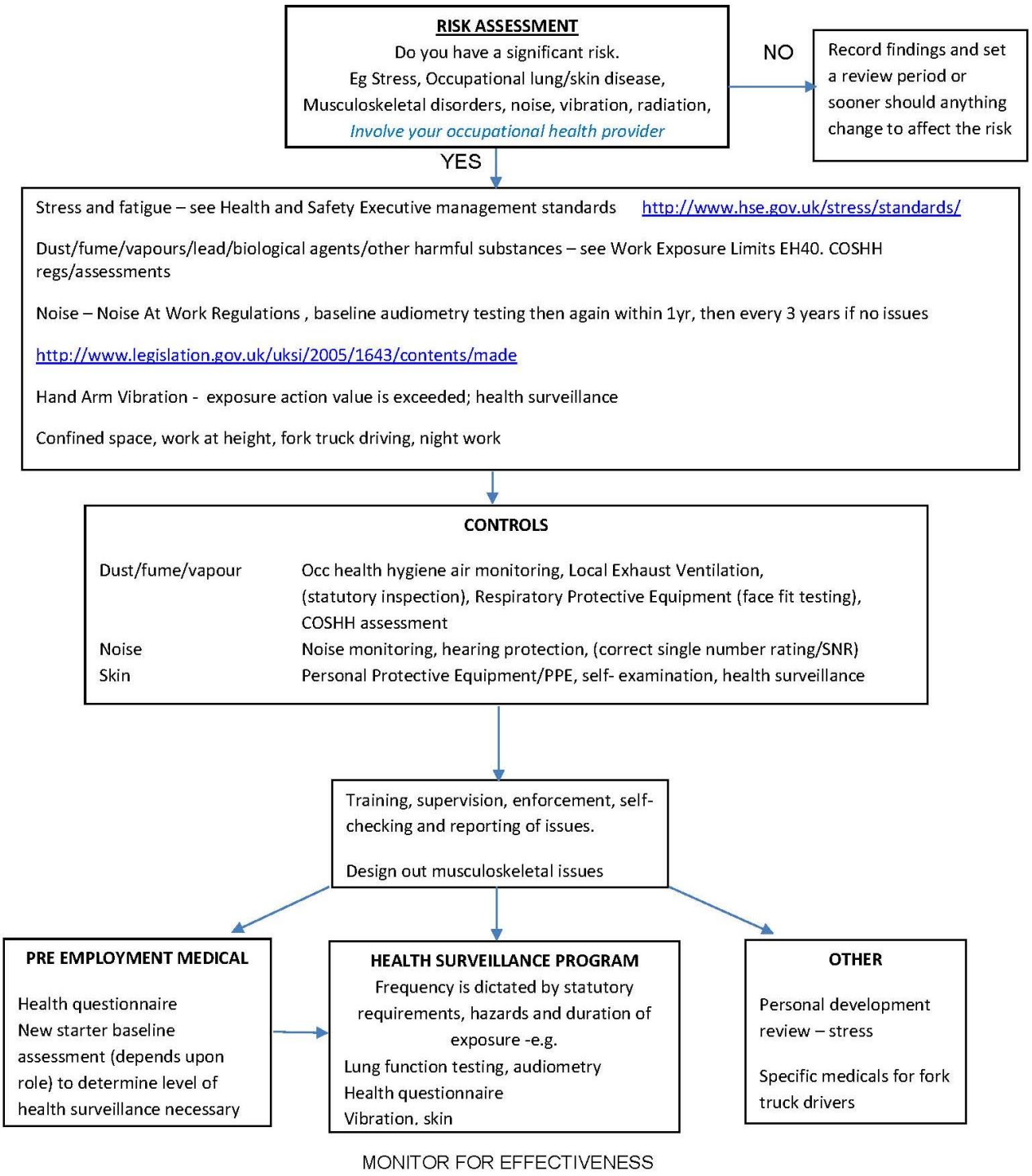
"By the term Occupational Health", we mean keeping people well at work; physically and mentally by managing the hazards in the workplace that are likely to give rise to work-related ill health.

This document aims to give you an outline of the types of hazards likely to be presented within the maltings industry and some further information as to how these hazards may be managed including some statutory requirements.

JOB/ROLE		OFFICE BASED	SALES	ENGINEER	OPERATIVE/ TECHNICIAN	CLEANER	LABORATORY	FACILITIES	TRANSPORT/ DRIVER	WAREHOUSE	PACKER
CHEMICALS	skin check										
DUST	lung function, allergy										
BIOLOGICAL HAZARDS											
MANUAL HANDLING	questionnaire										
WORK RELATED UPPER LIMB DISORDERS											
DISPLAY SCREEN EQUIPMENT	eyesight test										
HAND ARM VIBRATION	hand check										
DRIVING	eyesight test										
NIGHT WORK	questionnaire										
NOISE	Statutory hearing test										
TRAVEL ABROAD											
STRESS	Incl fatigue										
CONFINED SPACE											
HEIGHTS											
FORK TRUCK	eyesight test, diabetes										
RETURN TO WORK, LONG TERM SICK											
NEW STARTER MEDICAL BASELINE											

YES
IF RELEVANT

OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH BEST PRACTICE FLOW CHART



http://www.hse.gov.uk/health-surveillance/what/index.htm

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Work Related Upper Limb Disorders (WRULDS) are part of a wider topic related to musculoskeletal disorders (MSDs). They are often associated with computer work station use and therefore the Display Screen Equipment Regulations have a requirement for a 'user' to be assessed. General manual handling must also be taken into consideration.

The condition affects muscles, tendons, ligaments and soft tissue in the neck, shoulder, arms, wrists and fingers and are often referred to as 'RSI' caused by overuse whilst undertaking a particular task. WRULDS are widespread throughout industry caused by repetitive work, poor posture and/or excessive force. The risks must be assessed in the same way as any other hazard in the workplace and there are several tools available to help with this process.

Further information may be found at www.hse.gov.uk/msd/manualhandling

Hand Arm Vibration

Hand-arm vibration is vibration transmitted into workers' hands and arms. This can come from use of hand-held power tools (such as grinders or road breakers), hand-guided equipment (such as powered lawnmowers or pedestrian controlled floor saws) or by holding materials being worked by hand-fed machines (such as pedestal grinders or forge hammers). Frequent exposure can lead to permanent ill-health effects known as hand arm vibration syndrome (HAV's) and carpal tunnel syndrome. These effects can have a significant affect upon a person's lifestyle causing pain and discomfort.

Employer duties are to reduce the risks from vibration to the lowest level reasonably practicable and to reduce exposure to as low as is reasonably practicable if it is above the Exposure Action Value (EAV). You must not allow exposures to exceed the Exposure Limit Value. Your health surveillance should identify any harm early on, so appropriate action by you at this point will prevent disability.

Further information may be found at www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/indg175.pdf

Noise

The Control of Noise at Work Regulations 2005 (the 'Noise Regulations') require you to eliminate or reduce risks to health and safety from noise at work. A risk assessment must be undertaken by a competent person to establish noise levels throughout the work areas. As a rule of thumb if you have difficulty holding a conversation at arms - length then it is likely that the first action level is breached.

There are two action levels; at 80dB(A) hearing protection must be made available upon request. At 85dB(A) hearing protection becomes mandatory and it must be provided by the employer to anyone who may be affected.

Other duties under the Regulations include the need to make sure the legal limits on noise exposure are not exceeded, maintain and ensure the use of equipment you provide to control noise risks, provide your employees with information, instruction and training; and monitor workers' hearing ability in the form of health surveillance. Where there is a risk of noise induced hearing loss identified, then a hearing test becomes a statutory requirement every 3 years.

Further information may be found at www.hse.gov.uk/noise/index

Fork truck/driving

People selected to operate lift trucks should be free from disabilities, either physical or psychological, that might pose a threat to their own health and safety or the safety of others who might be affected by them operating lift trucks. Fitness for operating should always be judged on a case-by-case basis. A risk assessment must identify any hazards associated with the job and working environment and areas

of concern requiring management. A policy should be established which includes drugs and alcohol and eye testing.

Similarly, with general driving, a policy is required which determines requirements such as checking driving licences, insurance etc.

Further information may be found at www.hse.gov.uk/workplacetransport

Grain dust

Grain dust is a known and recognised asthmagen and exposure to it is the UK's second most common cited cause of occupational asthma, and also causes dermatitis.

The Control of Substances Hazardous to Health Regulations require the employer to assess the risk to the health of his workers and the precautions needed to protect them. Control measures should be at source i.e adequate ventilation systems in the first instance or where adequate control of exposure cannot be achieved by other means, providing respirators (eg dust masks). These must be fit tested and worn in a clean- shaven state. reducing exposure to airborne grain dust to as low as is reasonably practicable (ALARP) and, in any case, below the workplace exposure limit (WEL) which is 10 mg/m3 of grain dust averaged over eight hours.

Where a risk assessment has identified a risk to a persons' health then health surveillance must also be undertaken usually in the form of a lung function test at the start of the employ and at intervals thereafter determined by the risk assessment and with the help of an occupational health specialist.

Further information may be found at /www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/guidance/g402.pdf
www.hse.gov.uk/pUbns/priced/hsg53.pdf www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/eh66.htm

Chemicals and biological hazards

The majority of chemicals used within this industry are for cleaning purposes. An assessment is required under The Control of Substances Hazardous to Health Regulations (COSHH) which will identify the exact nature of the hazards and control measures required; i.e specifications for any personal protective equipment (PPE) including break through time for gloves. A general visual check of hands and skin can easily pick up any changes which should be included within the organisations reporting procedures.

Further information may be found at www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/guidance/g403.pdf

Other considerations which fall under COSHH might be the risk of exposure to legionella from domestic water systems www.hse.gov.uk/pUbns/priced/l8.pdf and leptospirosis from rodent urine.
www.hse.gov.uk/.../healthrisks/.../leptospirosis-weils-disease.htm

If you have a water treatment facility there may also be associated biological hazards to consider.
www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/indg198.pdf

General Health Requirements

Some work situations present a higher level of duty of care due to the nature of the risks which might be presented and the general health of the individual at the time. For example, working in a confined space could give rise to claustrophobic effect due to not feeling 100% on an occasion; one means of controlling this is to ask the question at the time and include within the safe system of work. Likewise, when working at height or where extreme temperatures could affect a persons' reaction time to what might otherwise be a 'normal' situation.

Stress www.hse.gov.uk/stress
Over 11 million days are lost at work a year because of stress at work. Employers have a legal duty to protect employees from stress at work by undertaking a risk assessment and acting on it. The HSE defines stress as 'the adverse reaction people have to excessive pressures or other types of demand placed on them'. It is important to recognise that stress affects people in different ways and to varying degrees.

The Management Standards are a good place to start, and also demonstrate good practice helping the employer to identify 6 key areas which may contribute to workplace stress. The link above will take you to the main web page and from there you will be able to obtain further links to guidance and advice pages.

www.hse.gov.uk/stress/assets/docs/examplepolicy.pdf

Night working and fatigue management
Fatigue may be described as a general feeling of tiredness and being unable to perform work effectively. It can be influenced by other 'human factors' such as issues related to heat stress, thermal comfort and lead to operator errors and root cause of accidents. It should be managed in the same way as any other hazard.

www.hse.gov.uk/humanfactors/topics/10fatigue.pdf
www.hse.gov.uk/temperature/thermal/factors.htm
www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/indg451.htm
www.hse.gov.uk/pUbns/priced/hsg256.pdf

Monitor and review for effectiveness
It is important to make sure that management systems and control measures are having the desired effect. Reactive monitoring by examining incident and ill- health data will help to identify where there may be an issue to address. Proactive monitoring if preferable because it helps to identify problems before they cause injury or ill- health. This can be achieved by undertaking regular work area inspections which include close examination of safe systems of work.

http://www.hse.gov.uk/leadership/monitor.htm