For guidance on managing construction health risks go to
www.hse.gov.uk/construction

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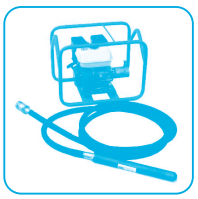
Poker Vibrator

The rules and procedures in force where people are at work may require the person responsible for this equipment to carry out a specific risk assessment



1. It is important to read this entire leaflet before using the poker vibrator.
2. Plan your work and think ahead to make sure you will always be working safely.
3. Petrol is highly flammable. Take care not to cause a fire or explosion.
4. Cement mixes are harmful to eyes, lungs and skin. Take precautions to prevent contact with cement mix.
5. This poker vibrator is designed for use in fresh concrete to remove air voids and speed the release of trapped water. It is not designed for any other purpose.
6. The action of this poker vibrator can cause injury or damage if the machine is not used in a careful and controlled way.
7. If you have not used this type of poker vibrator before, familiarise yourself with how the machine works before you start on the main task.
8. The following items of personal protective equipment are the minimum requirement: goggles; dust mask- a minimum of FFP3 protection; ear muffs or plugs giving protection to reduce exposure to 87dB(A) at the ear; Safety boots/wellingtons; industrial quality gloves.
9. A personal first-aid kit should be available.
10. This machine must not be used by young persons, or by anyone under the influence of drugs or alcohol.
11. This poker vibrator is designed for operation by an able bodied adult. Anyone with either temporary or permanent disability must seek expert advice before using it.
12. Poker vibrators are heavy machines, get help if you have to unload it from your vehicle. Do not lift beyond your own capabilities.

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Using the Poker Vibrator

1. Wear protective equipment including gloves, goggles and safety boots.
2. The unit may need to warm up for a few minutes in cold weather for maximum efficiency.
3. If the vibrating head does not vibrate when the machine is started, tap the nose onto a hard surface. Do not tap or hit the outer housing of the head.
4. Watch out for signs that vibration may be affecting hands. If fingers start to tingle or feel numb, take a short break from using the machine. Exercise fingers to encourage blood circulation. Find out more about vibration. **Ask the hire company for a copy of the HAE leaflet no. 2150 – Hand-arm vibration or visit www.hse.gov.uk/vibration**
5. To help prevent vibration affecting hands, operate the machine for shorter periods, or share the job with a workmate. Keep hands warm - wearing gloves may help do this.
6. Take care not to bend the flexible drive through tight angles, for example over shuttering.
7. Always move and withdraw the vibrating head steadily - this will help avoid creating voids..
8. Do not touch the vibrating part of the poker while it is in operation.
9. Do not lay the vibrating poker on a hard surface while it is still vibrating. It will cause damage to the surface and the poker.
10. Do not engage or disengage the flexible drive coupling while the engine is running.
11. Stop the engine if leaving the machine unattended.
12. The poker vibrator must be washed clean as soon as the work is finished before any concrete hardens.
13. If the flexible drive has to be disengaged, take care to keep the open end of it clean - do not leave it lying in dirt.
14. If the equipment does not work properly do not attempt to repair it. Contact the hire company.
15. You may want to read this leaflet again. Please keep it safely until you finish work.

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HAE HIRE ASSOCIATION EUROPE
Hire Association Europe
2450 Regents Court
The Crescent
Birmingham Business Park
Solihull B37 7YE

Telephone: 44 (0) 121 380 4600
Fax: 44 (0) 121 333 4109
Email: mail@hae.org.uk
website: www.hae.org.uk

Useful Reference Points • www.hae.org.uk/businessguard

CEMENT MIXES AND CONTACT DERMATITIS

1. Wet cement mix is a substance that can cause contact dermatitis.
2. Contact dermatitis is a rash that may occur when the skin reacts to certain substances. The rash can vary but it is usually itchy and causes flaky skin and only occurs where the substance is in contact with the skin.
3. Wash cement or plaster mixes from your skin immediately. Thoroughly rinse eyes and seek medical advice without delay.
4. Mild dermatitis will heal providing there is no further contact. If the rash persists seek medical advice. Learn more about contact dermatitis – visit www.bcds.org.uk
5. Gloves, long sleeves and full trousers must be worn to prevent the mixes coming into contact with bare skin.

WORK AREA

1. Do not use this machine where there is a danger of explosion. It will ignite fumes from petrol, or gas cylinders.
2. Using this equipment indoors or in confined spaces could cause **fatal** carbon monoxide poisoning. **Never** use it in domestic premises and only use it in other indoor situations if its suitability and the ventilation required has been **fully** assessed. Mechanical extraction ventilation will almost always be required.
3. Make sure the work area is clear and safe and that no-one is close by and could cause distractions.
4. Protect other people from the noise and wet cement. Warn others to keep away, set up an exclusion zone around the area where the vibrating poker is being used with physical barriers, barrier tape and signs. Keep children and animals away when using this equipment.
5. Work should stop immediately should anyone, other than those directly assisting with the work, enter the exclusion zone.
6. Clear the area of trip hazards e.g. rubble, rubbish etc.
7. Position the drive unit so that all of the concrete needed to be worked on can easily be reached. Make sure that the flexible drive is not going to be damaged by traffic, or create an obstruction.

OPERATORS

1. The following items of personal protective equipment (PPE) are the minimum that should be worn whenever this poker vibrator is used. Particular jobs or environments may require a higher level of protection. Ensure there is no loose or flapping clothing that could get caught in the machinery.
2. Goggles must be worn when working with this machine.
3. This equipment is likely to cause noise levels up to 93 dB(A) - wear appropriate ear muffs or plugs giving hearing protection for this level as a minimum.
4. Safety boots/wellingtons must be worn. Remember that you may have to stand in wet concrete.
5. Vibration from using this machine can be hazardous. Warm hands up before starting work, and wear industrial quality gloves to keep hands warm whilst working. Find out more about the effects of vibration - **Ask the hire company for a copy of the HAE leaflet no. 2150 – Hand-arm vibration or visit www.hse.gov.uk/vibration**
6. Industrial quality gloves, long sleeves, and full trousers must be worn to prevent hot mixes coming into contact with bare skin.
7. Anybody who is working close by will also need to wear identical personal protective equipment.

POKER VIBRATOR

1. Check the drive unit, flexible drive and couplings, and vibrating head. If anything is found to be damaged, do not use the poker vibrator - contact the hire company.
2. Find out how to switch the engine off. Before using the poker vibrator locate the off switch.

REFUELLING

1. No smoking.
2. Stop the engine and let it cool down.
3. If possible move the machine away from your work area.
4. Clean the filler cap and the area around it to prevent dirt falling into the fuel tank.
5. Use a funnel and clean petrol when refuelling. Do not spill any fuel on yourself or the machine.
6. Wipe any fuel off the machine. Dispose of fuel soaked cloth carefully.
7. If very small quantities of fuel are spilt on the ground, wipe it up or cover it with soil.
8. If any fuel is spilt on clothes, change them straight away.
9. Put all fuel caps back on properly, and move the fuel can to a safe, cool place.

STARTING THE ENGINE

1. If the hire company has supplied special instructions, follow them. Otherwise, follow the instructions given below. Position the Poker Drive Unit at the work place before starting the engine.
2. Check the oil and fuel levels before trying to start the engine.
3. Switch the ignition switch to the ON position.
4. Check that the throttle lever is in the IDLE position.
5. Do not wear gloves when starting the engine. Also, ensure there is no loose clothing or flapping sleeves that could get caught.
6. Turn the fuel tap to the open position.
7. Open the choke lever fully, when starting from cold.
8. Grasp the pull cord firmly and pull upwards then guide the cord back so that it recoils correctly.
9. If the engine is now running, shut the choke lever.
10. Open the throttle lever to the RUN position.
11. Allow the engine to run for a short period to warm up before attempting to commence vibrating.
12. To stop the engine turn the ignition switch to the OFF position and close the fuel supply tap.

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