

Safety in several languages

With an international workforce, putting across health and safety messages can prove difficult. But tool manufacturer Makita is addressing the problem with a multi-lingual safety guide



TRAINING
DAMON SCHÜNMMANN

Migratory labour in the UK, while adding to the available workforce, has brought with it challenges such as language barriers that must be overcome if site workers are to be educated and protected to the levels required by the law.

Tool manufacturer Makita spotted an opportunity to address this problem and has launched its safety talks in six additional languages to English, with Polish, Latvian, Lithuanian, Czech, Russian and Romanian all added.

The talk, available on a USB memory stick, is broken down into 10 subjects and includes printable PDFs of all graphics provided with captions also translated in the various languages. It also features an assessment form and trainers notes, with some basic tips on presentation skills.

Clicking on the appropriate country flag icon will allow for the same graphic to be displayed but with the caption shown in the appropriate language. Subjects covered have been agreed with CITB and include:

- Correct and safe use of equipment;
- Dust and fumes, vibration;
- Eye protection;
- Noise;
- PPE;
- Skin protection;
- Portable electrical appliances;
- Use of electricity;
- Use of hand tools.

Each presentation has at least 15 illustrations with notes also supplied for the trainer, along with a multiple-choice assessment form. Available from Makita distributors, the training aid costs £69.99 plus VAT.

On the upside, it's certainly

Safety Talk 4 Vibration



Other Points to consider

The first signs may simply be a tingling in the fingers, but can also result in fatigue, irritation and loss of concentration - as a result increasing the general risks to safety at work.



PREVENTING EXPOSURE IS RELATIVELY EASY - CURING HAND ARM VIBRATION SYNDROME IS NOT!



straightforward to use and gets its messages across in a clear and very basic manner.

However, the presentations are heavily branded with company references and logos - something that is perhaps to be expected

from such an offering - while the images of equipment being used are all clearly identifiable as being Makita products.

That said, the advice is generic and does what it says on the tin (and yes, the memory stick comes in one).

This kind of health and safety support is not an entirely new development for the company, which last year launched what it says was the first City & Guilds-approved Correct & Safe Use power tool training course (CN 25 Mar 2010).

This, then, is an emerging

revenue stream for the company, and if it can reduce reportable incidents among non-native speakers then that has to be a good thing, right?

The dangers of overlooking maintenance

TOOL CARE
JOE CLARKE

The risks posed by Hand Arm Vibration (HAV) have been widely discussed, as has the importance of proper dust extraction and control in small tool use, and these rightly remain very high on our industry's agenda.

However, the less-discussed and often overlooked need to test, maintain and repair small tools plays as much of a role in preventing more immediate health issues.

A *Which?* magazine article of 1 April last year highlighted the need for increased consistency throughout the hire industry to help avoid unnecessary accidents. In its damning exposé, stories of damaged cables, missing fuses or fuses replaced with tin foil highlighted the frightening state of tools provided by some of the leading firms in our industry.

Just last month a timber frame company was fined by the HSE after a guard was removed from a table-mounted circular saw, which led to a 20-year-old production worker losing a thumb. These examples only serve to reinforce the need for basic tool care, including visual checks and Portable Appliance Tests (PAT), both on and off site, to ensure that accidents like this are avoided.

The Hireman managing director Neil Graham believes the first step to safe tool use is to make sure ▶

▶ that you buy correctly. British manufacturers such as Blakley and ArcGen-Hilta certainly aren't the cheapest, but the quality is second to none, and it seems pointless to spend £1,000 on a Hilti breaker and then supply a cheap transformer and extension lead, which reduce the benefits of using high-quality tools.

Of equal importance is a regular and rigorous maintenance procedure. Compliance with the Electricity at Work Regulations 1989 (EAWR) requires that portable appliance testing (PAT) be completed at least every three months.

These basics protect the reputation of our industry, those who work in it and the training and development aspirations of young people looking for a career in construction.

Joe Clarke is product manager at the Hireman (London)

Compaction plates help reduce HAV

VIBRATION
DAMON SCHÜNMANN

This summer saw JCB launch a new range of compaction plates designed to reduce hand arm vibration levels.

The three new models - the FP1030, FP1540 and FP1550 - feature 300 mm, 400 mm and 500 mm-wide base plates respectively. The smallest delivers a compaction force of 10 kN while the larger two models achieve 15 kN.

Aimed at rental companies, road gangs and driveway, building or surface repair contractors, they are designed for the compaction of hardcore and soil.

According to JCB, the patent-pending handle design ensures HAV levels (tested to EN500-4) are



among the lowest in the industry - allowing up to 15 hours' operation on the largest model.

The manufacturer says they are also intended for asphalt work when fitted with an optional water kit, while a paving kit tailors them for non-cohesive materials such as stone paving.

New markets for cordless manufacturers

CORDLESS TOOLS
DAMON SCHÜNMANN

Cordless tool manufacturers have been quick to highlight their health and safety benefits, particularly when operators are working at height.

An example is Hilti's new ST 1800-A cordless screwdriver for metal construction. The company claims this is the first cordless screw product for metal roofing, cladding, siding and decking applications, and can install driving, self-drilling and self-tapping screws.

The manufacturer says it has identified several other sectors that will benefit from cordless tools and that further products are being customer tested.

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