

Electricity Industry Occupational Health Advisory Group



Guidance Note 3.5

Fitness for Wind Turbine Working

The Occupational Health Advisory Group for the Electricity Industry (OHAG) is an independent body of senior occupational physicians. They all have a professional role to provide advice to individual companies in the electricity industry and they meet together three times a year to discuss matters of common interest and to promote good practice in occupational health across the industry. The main route for doing this is by the preparation of guidance notes on topics of interest to the industry. The remit of OHAG and its guidance covers all aspect of the industry from generation, through transmission and distribution to retail and supply.

Until now the promulgation of this OHAG guidance has largely been by means of paper copies of the documents circulating within individual companies in the electricity industry. OHAG recognises that there is a need to make these papers more widely available and is grateful for the support provided by the Energy Networks Association (ENA) in hosting these documents on their website, and the links to them from the websites of the Association of Energy Producers (AEP) and the Energy Retail Association (ERA).

The guidance notes will be of interest to managers, employees and occupational health professionals within the industry. They give general advice which has to be interpreted in the light of local circumstances. Health professional using the guidance retain an individual responsibility to act in accordance with appropriate professional standards and ethics. This guidance is offered in good faith and neither the individual members of OHAG, the companies they support, the ENA, AEP or the ERA can accept any liability for actions taken as a result of using the guidance.



Fitness for Wind Turbine Working

1. Introduction

This guidance has been prepared by the Electricity Industry Occupational Health Advisory Group (OHAG).

The document refers specifically to the medical and physical fitness of employees working on wind turbines, whether land based or “near” off shore. Such work is physically demanding and a good degree of health and fitness is needed in order to undertake work tasks effectively and safely.

2. Aims of this Document

This document provides guidance on the medical assessment of those transferring to, climbing and working within turbines as described in the Introduction. The assessment is tailored to the work in question, unlike the ENG1 (seafarer’s medical) and UKOG (off shore medical assessment). It is unfortunate that these two health assessments are frequently viewed as obligatory by contactors or operators of near off shore wind farms.

3. Relevant Legislation

- Health & Safety at Work Act 1974
- Management of Health & Safety at Work Regulations 1999
- Work at Height Regulations 2005
- Confined Space Regulations 1997
- Equality Act 2010

4. Relevant Guidance

‘Medical Fitness to Work – Guidelines for near offshore and land based renewable energy projects’ published by RenewableUK, February 2011

www.renewable-uk.com



5. Assessment Process & Medical Fitness Standard

A health assessment should be undertaken at pre-employment, pre-placement and after any significant incident, injury or sickness absence. Periodic assessments should be undertaken every two years, but may be necessary more frequently in an individual case where this is recommended by the examining physician.

The assessment should consist of a medical history questionnaire, clinical examination and a fitness assessment. The assessment may be undertaken by an occupational health nurse with reference to a suitably qualified and experienced doctor for specialist advice

A recommended medical fitness standard for land based and near off shore wind turbine working is detailed in an appendix to the document 'Medical Fitness to Work – Guidelines for near offshore and land based renewable energy projects' published by RenewableUK, February 2011. This is a document jointly produced by RenewableUK and OHAG.

www.renewable-uk.com

6. References and sources of further information

'Medical Fitness to Work – guidelines for near offshore and land based renewable energy projects' published by RenewableUK, February 2011