SHOUT ABOUT NOISE!

Your unique guide to understanding the NEW noise at work legislation

More than two million people are exposed to noise levels at work that may be harmful.*
The effects of damage to hearing as a result of exposure to noise is permanent.*

What is noise?

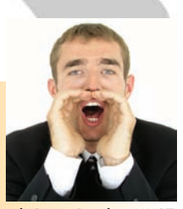
Noise is unwanted sound which can cause physical damage and interfere with communication, a combination of which can pose a serious risk to health.

With the new Control of Noise at Work Regulations 2005 coming into force in April 2006, employers must comply with the act and can benefit from following a simple, practical framework to manage noise risks in the workplace.

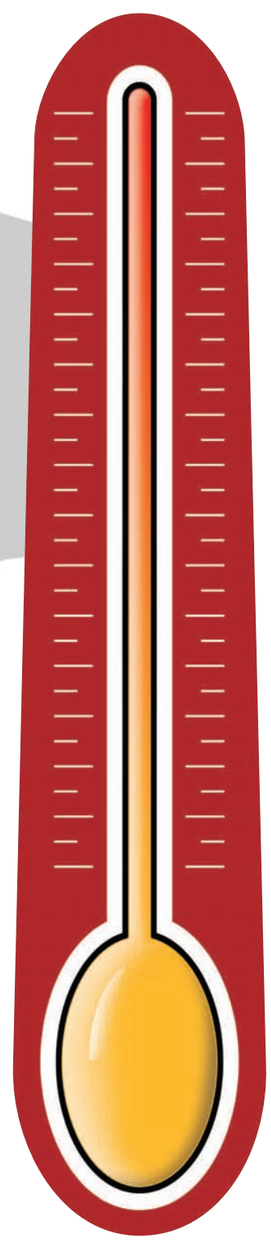
Jet plane at take-off - 160dB

Large chipping hammer - 120dB

Car on motorway - 100dB



Voice (shouting) - 80dB



Gunshot - 140dB

Blaring music - 110dB

Lawn mower - 90dB

Busy office - 70dB

Control of Noise at Work Regulations 2005 - Main Duties:

- *Lower exposure action value of 80dB (A), or peak of 135dB (C)*
- *Upper exposure action value of 85dB (A), or peak of 137dB (C)*
- *Daily/weekly personal exposure limit values of 87dB (A) with a peak of 140dB (C)*

If the lower action value is exceeded, a Noise Risk Assessment must be conducted and an action plan developed. Hearing protection must also be made available.

If the upper action value is exceeded, a Noise Risk Assessment must be conducted and an action plan developed. At this level, wearing hearing protection is compulsory for all employees and a health surveillance programme must be implemented.

The exposure limit value provides an absolute limit of exposure and is measured at the ear. Therefore hearing protection can be considered as part of your control measures.

Managing Noise in the Workplace - an Employer's Guide

Step 1 *Assess the Risk*

Step 2 *Eliminate or Control Risks*

Step 3 *Provide Hearing Protection and Health Surveillance*

Step 4 *Inform, Instruct and Train the staff*

Step 5 *Use and maintain equipment in accordance with manufacturers' instructions*

At all stages, review and update regularly!

For further guidance please see the Hewden Noise at Work Guide available soon from your local hewden depot or at www.hewden.co.uk *Information on noise at work is also available at www.hse.gov.uk*

Top Tips For Noise

1) ***Sound intensity is the degree of strength measured in decibels (dB).*** *Since decibels are on a logarithmic scale, then for every 3dB increase, the actual noise intensity doubles.*
Example: 88dB has twice the sound pressure as 85dB.

2) ***Generally speaking, if you have to shout to be heard by someone who is only two or three feet away, the noise level at your work-place is probably greater than 85dB.***

3) ***Doubling the distance between the noise source and the receiver can produce a reduction of up to 6dB.***
Example: 90dB at 2 metres reduces to 84dB at 4 metres.

4) ***How do I add together 2 noise sources? By using this table…***

Difference between dB levels	Qty to add to the higher level
0	3
1	2.5
2	2
3	2
4	1.5
5	1
6	1
7	1
8	0.5
9	0.5
10 or more	0

Example: Two generators are running side by side at 80dB and 83db respectively. The difference is 3dB, therefore add 2 to the highest value. Noise value is therefore 85dB!

5) ***Estimating exposure using the ready reckoner below…***

Simply take the exposure points from your daily exposure(s) - there could be more than one - and add them together. Compare the total points on the exposure chart below right, to determine your daily exposure value. If the total lies in the green zone, the exposure value has not been exceeded, if in the yellow zone, the lower exposure value has been exceeded, and if in the red zone, the upper exposure action value has been breached.

Duration of Exposure (hours per day)

Sound pressure level, LAeq (dB)	1/4	1/2	1	2	4	8	10	12	Total exposure points	Noise exposure LEPd (dB)
105	320	625	1250						3200	100
100	100	200	400	800					1600	97
97	50	100	200	400	800				1000	95
95	32	65	125	250	500	1000			800	94
94	25	50	100	200	400	800			630	93
93	20	40	80	160	320	630			500	92
92	16	32	65	125	250	500	625		400	91
91	12	25	50	100	200	400	500	600	320	90
90	10	20	40	80	160	320	400	470	250	89
89	8	16	32	65	130	250	310	380	200	88
88	6	12	25	50	100	200	250	300	160	87
87	5	10	20	40	80	160	200	240	130	86
86	4	8	16	32	65	130	160	190	100	85
85		6	12	25	50	100	125	150	80	84
84		5	10	20	40	80	100	120	65	83
83		4	8	16	32	65	80	95	50	82
82			6	12	25	50	65	75	40	81
81			5	10	20	40	50	60	32	80
80			4	8	16	32	40	48	25	79
79				6	13	25	32	38	25	78
78				5	10	20	25	30	16	77
75					5	10	13	15		

6) ***Do not get caught up in the science behind estimating exposure values.*** *Use simple noise meters, information from manufacturers and suppliers or from similar assessments. Remember, the Regulations are concerned with controlling noise and not measuring it.*

** Source: Health and Safety Executive*

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