

Health and Safety

Procedure (026) Noise

1. General Details

- **1.1.** The Noise at Work Regulations 1989 Regulations require that exposure to noise is eliminated, minimised or controlled as far as is reasonably practicable. This procedure outlines how this will be achieved
- **1.2.** Site and planning teams should consider sources of noise that are likely to be generated from site activities, and the impact it may have on site-based personnel and the surrounding community
- **1.3.** Prolonged exposure to excessive noise can result in sometimes irreversible harm such as noise-induced hearing loss or tinnitus which can gradually get worse over time
- **1.4.** Working methods should be adopted which seek to minimise the need to expose workers to both excessive noise exposure
- **1.5.** Site management must ensure that all operations on their sites involving exposure to noise are controlled and properly risk assessed
- **1.6.** Generally, newer equipment and updates to work processes seek to reduce the amount of noise they generate when in use, such as vibro piling which is much quieter than traditional driven piling, and more development on modern equipment such as 110v portable generators which now include more efficient mufflers and dampeners to reduce noise levels

2. Risk Assessment

2.1. Noise exposure is measured using dB, and a practical guide which can be used on-site to ascertain whether a noise risk assessment will be required can be found below

Test	Probably noise level	A risk assessment will be required if level of noise exposure is likely to exceed:
Noise is intrusive but normal conversation is possible	80 dB	6 Hours
A person needs to shout to talk somebody who is approx. 2m away	85 dB	2 hours
A person has to shout to talk to somebody who is approx. 1m away	90 dB	45 minutes

- **2.2.** For most noise exposure, levels are averaged over a period of time to take into account fluctuating noise levels through a working day. (Typically 8 hours)
- **2.3.** Sub-contractors must ensure that risk assessments and control measures are in place for all activities which will generate noise and that their operatives are briefed on the risks. Copies of noise risk assessments must be passed to site for review and filing

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3. Action Levels & Exposure Limits

- **3.1.** An action level is a noise exposure level which employers are required to take certain steps to reduce harmful effects on hearing. There are two main action levels for continuous noise.
- **3.2.** The Lower exposure action value is **80 dB(A)**. At this point, information and training must be provided and hearing protection must be available for use
- **3.3.** The upper exposure action value is **85 dB(A)**. At this point, reasonably practicable measures must be taken, such as exchanging older portable generators for newer, quieter models or the implementation of ear protection zones etc. Hearing protection <u>must</u> be worn at this level
- **3.4.** The exposure limit value, at which no person can be exposed to (taking hearing protection into account is **87 dB (A)**
- **3.5.** Examples of noise generated by common tools and machinery used on site include:

•	Petrol driven cut-off saw	Up to 100 dB (A)
•	Hammer drills	Up to 100 dB (A)
•	Impact Wrenches	Up to 97 dB (A)
•	Generators	Up to 90 dB (A)
•	Nail Guns	Up to 97 dB (A)

- **3.6.** Site Management must ensure that those carrying out works on site which generate noise are wearing appropriate task-specific hearing protection and others working in the immediate area are not exposed to excessive noise exposure
- **3.7.** Manufacturers / supplier data should indicate what noise levels are generated from the tool or equipment and contractors should be aware of this information
- **3.8.** If there are concerns on noise generated by a contractor's tools, plant or equipment, then the contractors risk assessment should be checked for which control measures should be in place for the task

4. Planning

- **4.1.** Consideration must be made for any excessive noise which can be identified and controlled during the planning phase. This should include consideration for:
 - Position of site compound Nuisance noise to neighbouring properties, power supply such as generator
 - Local authority restrictions 'Out of hours' work where excess noise cannot be generated
 - Foundation type *Piling works, excess noise to neighbouring properties, requirement for letter drops prior to works etc.*
- **4.2.** Any anticipated sources of excessive noise must be included within the Construction Phase Plan along with agreed control measures
- 4.3. Planning consent and restrictions set for working hours by local authorities must be observed at all times

Related Documents

HSE Noise Exposure Calculator (Ready Reckoner)

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