



Occupational Noise

The Noise at Work Regulations 1989 have been replaced by a new set of Regulations, The Noise Regulations 2005 which became effective from 6th April 2006. They require employers to prevent or reduce risks to health and safety from exposure to noise at work.

The Regulations require you as an employer to:

- assess the risks to your employees from noise at work;
- take action to reduce the noise exposure that produces those risks;
- provide employees with hearing protection if you cannot sufficiently reduce the noise exposure by using other methods;
- ensure the legal limits on noise exposure are not exceeded;
- provide your employees with information, instruction and training;
- undertake health surveillance where there is a risk to health.

What are the action levels and limit values?

The Noise Regulations require you to take specific action at certain action values. These relate to:

- the levels of exposure to noise of an employee averaged over a working day or week; and
- the maximum noise exposure to an employee in a working day.

The values are:

- lower exposure action values:-
daily or weekly exposure of 80 dB; (a reduction of 5dB from the 1989 Regulations) peak sound pressure of 135 dB;
- upper exposure action values:-
daily or weekly exposure of 85 dB; (a reduction of 5dB from the 1989 Regulations) peak sound pressure of 137 dB.

There are also levels of noise exposure which must not be exceeded:

- exposure limit values:-
daily or weekly exposure of 87 dB;
peak sound pressure of 140 dB.

These exposure limit values take account of any reduction in exposure provided by hearing protection.

Assessing and Recording Noise Exposure

Employers are required to assess noise exposure if it is likely that employees will be exposed to the lower or upper action levels:

- a) to ensure that everyone likely to be exposed is identified.
- b) to obtain sufficient information to guide the action required by the Regulations.

The Service

HSB provides an independent assessment using calibrated acoustic monitoring equipment to assist employers in complying with the Regulations.

Quotations can be provided on minimal information:

- Size of Location
- Nos. of Departments and Employees
- Process/Type of Industry
- Nos. of Machines

To find out more about the services that HSB provide and the ways we help industry improve safety, reduce operating costs and improve efficiency, contact your local HSB office.

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