

# HEALTH AND SAFETY

## SAFETY POLICY & ARRANGEMENTS



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### Introduction

**This document forms part of the National Ice Centre's organisational written safety policy arrangements.**

Departments, services or teams may consider it appropriate to develop additional guidance and systems of work on specific work related activities.

Where proposals, additional guidance or changes to systems of work will have an impact on health, safety and welfare, this will be discussed and agreed at the Health & Safety Committee.

If you have any questions or require further information or support on the contents of this document, please contact The NIC Health & Safety Advisor or Corporate Safety Advice.

### Overview Of Management & Colleague Responsibilities

#### Manager Responsibilities

Below is an overview of the responsibilities which is intended to support managers in identifying their key duties that need to be taken to comply with the requirements of this document and the safety management systems of the National Ice Centre.

- Managers need to ensure that any noisy workplaces have a suitable noise assessment undertaken by a trained and competent person.
- Managers must actively look to reduce noise levels where possible and demonstrate how this has been achieved.
- Managers need to consider the provision of suitable and appropriate hearing protection is available.
- Managers must ensure that appropriate hearing protection is worn in hearing protection zones by colleagues.
- Managers need to identify noisy work environments and ensure that they are signed correctly with hearing protection zones.
- Managers need to provide all affected colleagues with appropriate information, instruction, training and supervision on how to work safely within noisy environments. This must also include where used, training on the safe use hearing protection.
- Managers must ensure that all colleagues working within a noisy working environment is referred Occupational Health for audiometric testing annually for 3 years and then every 2 / 3 years dependents on results.

#### Employee Responsibilities

The Health & Safety at Work Act 1974 section 7 requires all employees to consider their own health & safety and the safety of others.

As an employee of the National Ice Centre, if you have concerns in relation to health & safety that is likely to cause you or someone else, injury or ill health then you must ensure that the concern is communicated to your manager immediately.

You are also required to co-operate with the management of the National Ice Centre to ensure compliance with the health & safety arrangements, policies and procedures and work to the requirements identified within this document.

Hearing Protection programmes are only likely to succeed in preventing hearing damage where there is co-operation between managers and employees working in those areas and safety representatives.

To meet the requirement placed on employees by the Regulations they will need to:

- Wear ear protection (ear plugs or ear muffs) provided whenever they are in places where the Second or Peak Action levels might be reached, and every time they go into an area marked as an ear protection zone.
- Use any other equipment the manager provides under the Regulations. For example, if the machine is intended to have a silencer fitted – not to take it off.
- Look after any equipment provided under the Regulations.
- Report to their immediate supervisor/manager any defects discovered in any equipment used.
- Take on board all instruction and training that has been given in the use of equipment and ear protection.
- Co-operate with any person who undertakes a noise assessment of your work equipment.

Any colleague who has a concern regarding noise exposure that may exacerbate a medical condition, must inform their manager so Occupational Health can be made aware.

## Hazards Of Noise At Work

Exposure to excessive noise levels for prolonged periods may lead to irreversible hearing damage.

Managers need to be aware of the issues of noise and consider the following factors within the workplace regarding:

- high noise levels
- how long colleagues are exposed to the noise on a daily basis
- the accumulative exposure over a number of years.

Sometimes the 'Peak' pressures of the sound wave may be so great that there is a risk of instantaneous damage to hearing.

This is most likely where cartridge or pneumatically operated tools are used.

## Other Effects of Noise at Work

Noise at work can cause other problems such as disturbance, interference with communications and stress.

The Control of Noise at Work Regulations 2005 do not address these other issues directly but managers need to consider their impact and how they may need to be addressed.

## How Noise Is Measured

Noise is measured in Decibels which is a logarithmic not linear scale and in real terms means that for each 3dB increase in noise level identified, a doubling of the Sound Pressure Level (SPL) occurs

For measurement purpose, noise is measured using the (A) weighting.

This weighting considers the frequencies of noise as heard within the ear and disregards those frequencies outside the hearing range of people.

It is usually this weighting that is used in noise surveys and is identified by the dB(A)

## Legal Requirements

These regulations identify that where noise exposure is likely to be at or above the three action levels summarised below, managers **must** take action to reduce the levels to as low as reasonably practicable.

The action plan summarised in Appendix 2 will help you decide what you should do, but if you require further guidance on these matters contact Corporate Safety Advice.

The regulations specify the following noise levels:

- 1) The **Lower** exposure action values are:
  - (a) a daily or weekly personal noise exposure of  $L_{EPd}$  80 dB (A-weighted); and
  - (b) a peak sound pressure of 135 dB (C-weighted).
- 2) The **Upper** exposure action values are:
  - (a) a daily or weekly personal noise exposure of  $L_{EPd}$  85 dB (A-weighted); and
  - (b) a peak sound pressure of 137 dB (C-weighted).
- 3) The **Exposure Limit** values which must not be exceeded is set at:
  - (a) a daily or weekly personal noise exposure of  $L_{EPd}$  87 dB (A-weighted); and
  - (b) a peak sound pressure of 140 dB (C-weighted).

## Workplace Noise Assessments

Sound level meters are required to accurately measure noise levels within the workplace.

The noise assessment should identify whether noise exposure is likely to reach the action levels and provide information about the noise sources to enable effective controls to be implemented.

All noise assessments must be done by a competent person with specific training on how to undertake a workplace noise assessment.

Contact the NIC Health & Safety Advisor or Corporate Safety Advice for further information on workplace noise assessments.

Where any assessment shows employees are exposed to noise at work above, any of the identified action levels, a copy should be sent Occupational Health.

## Information To Employees

Where the workplace noise assessment identifies that exposure is at, or above, any of the action levels, information must be passed to all employees and other persons such as students, pupils and clients who work within the identified area.

This will ensure that they are aware of where there is a noise hazard and what actions are required of them to keep the risks of hearing damage to a minimum.

This will also include information, instruction, training and supervision on why, how and when to use and maintain suitable hearing protection.

## Reduction Of Noise Levels

Where the exposure levels exposed to colleagues needs to be controlled, the most reliable way of doing so will be to reduce the noise at source.

Where this is not possible, other controls should be considered to reduce the exposure to colleagues.

Many noise related issues can be managed if it is investigated effectively and noise reduction should be considered for any new equipment or process.

Any new equipment that may generate noise needs to be subject to both a noise and vibration assessment.

Managers need to consider whether it is possible to reduce either the number of colleagues working within a noisy area, or the time they have to spend in noisy areas.

Managers should consider if any of the following actions may contribute to the reduction of noise levels within the workplace:

- Introduce a low-noise purchasing policy for machinery and equipment

- Proper and regular maintenance of equipment
- Introduce engineering controls e.g. provide dampeners, anti-vibration mounts, silencers to air exhausts and reducing drop heights
- Provide insulation screens around equipment
- Use absorptive materials within the building to reduce reflected sound
- Discussions with users of noisy equipment

## Hiring Of Machinery & Equipment

Where machines and equipment liable to be noisy are hired, or leased, for use within the National Ice Centre, the responsibility for protecting employee's hearing remains with that colleagues manager.

Managers must liaise with suppliers and sub-contractors to ensure adequate information is available to them in order for a proper assessment of noise to be undertaken prior to their staff being exposed.

## Hearing Protection

The following recommendations are based on the new reduced noise levels that are to be introduced in April 2006.

This guidance and information note upon its release will consider these noise levels to be the accepted standard.

If people have to work in noise-hazardous areas they will need ear protectors ( earmuffs or ear plugs).

These, however, should not be regarded as a substitute for noise reduction.

As long as people work in noise at, or above the 85 dB(A) LEPd Upper Action Level or the 140 dB Peak Action Level, the Regulations require you to reduce the noise exposure by other means, as far as this is reasonably practicable.

Where noise exposures are above 85dB(A) (Upper level) or exceed the Peak Action Levels Management shall ensure so far as is reasonably practicable that no employee enters that area unless that employee is wearing personal hearing protectors.

Between 80dB(A) and 85dB(A) (Lower and Upper Action Levels) you should ensure:

- Protection is freely available.
- The employees know that unless they wear it there is some risk to their hearing.

These Regulations do not, however, make it a legal duty for the workers to wear hearing protection below the Upper Action level, however good practice should always recommend that this is worn.

Below 80dB(A) (Lower level), hearing protection is not required.

Hearing damage is cumulative.

Make sure young people in particular get into the routine of using hearing protection **before** their hearing is damaged.

Ear protection zones, where use of protection is compulsory, will have to be marked if this is reasonably practicable, using the sign shown opposite.

Everyone who enters into an identified zone, even for a short time, must use ear protection.



## Management Check On The Hearing Protection Regime

Managers must be assured that the hearing protection is available for colleagues and is being used at the required times.

Managers need to ensure that the protective equipment provided is kept in good condition both within storage and where it is with retained by colleagues.

Where there is a reliance on ear protectors, managers need to ensure that is being used and take appropriate action against colleagues who are not complying with the necessary requirements.

## **Audiometric Testing**

Audiometric testing (test of hearing) is an essential part of any programme of hearing conservation.

It provides a baseline measurement of an employee's hearing and helps to identify workers who may be particularly susceptible to noise induced hearing loss.

It also serves to demonstrate to the worker the effects of failure to wear hearing protection and assists in monitoring the effectiveness of a hearing conservation programme for a group of workers.

Management of the National Ice Centre is responsible for audiometric testing and should be informed of all employees working in an ear protection zone and/or exposed to noise at or above the action levels.

This audiometric testing should be undertaken by staff annually for 3 years and then every 2 / 3 years depends on results

Managers need to ensure Occupational Health informed of any changes in staff, and noise assessments in a hearing protection area.

## **References & Further Information**

The following information and reference material is in place to assist managers to understand their responsibilities and duties.

### **NIC Documentation and Links**

#### **External References**

- L108 – 'Reducing Noise at Work' (HSE)
- INDG 362 – 'Noise at Work – A Brief Guide to Controlling the Risks' (HSE)
- INDG 363 – 'Noise – Don't Lose Your Hearing' (HSE)
- [www.hse.gov.uk/noise/calculator.htm](http://www.hse.gov.uk/noise/calculator.htm) - HSE Website