

Version	3
Last Revision Date	July 2010



Noise at Work Policy



DOCUMENT CONTROL	
POLICY NAME	Noise at Work Policy
Department	Human Resources
Telephone Number	01443 425536
Initial Policy Launch Date	July 1996
Reviewing Officer	Mike Murphy
Review Date	July 2010
Date of Equality Impact Assessment	2008
REVISION HISTORY	
Date	Revised By
July 1996	Gerwyn Hogben
July 2002	Gerwyn Hogben
DOCUMENT APPROVAL	
This document has received approval from:	Date of Approval
HR Senior Management Team	
Corporate Management Team	
Cabinet	

CONTENTS

Introduction.....	1
Policy Statement	1
Policy Guidance.....	2
Noise Action Levels	2
Noise Assessment.....	2
Records	2
Reduction Of Risk Of Damage To Hearing	3
Reduction Of Noise Exposure	3
Ear Protection.....	3
Ear Protection Zones.....	4
Maintenance And Use Of Equipment	4
Provision Of Information, Instruction And Training	4
Competent Persons.....	5
Implementation Of The Policy	5
Main Points To Consider	5
Advice.....	6
Appendix A	7
Managers Checklist.....	9

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 This Policy Statement has been produced in response to the Noise at Work Regulations 1989.
- 1.2 These Regulations elaborate and reinforce the general legislation.

2. POLICY STATEMENT

- 2.1 The Council recognises it has a duty to protect its employees and others from situations which may involve a risk to their health, safety and welfare.
- 2.2 The Council will take all reasonable steps necessary to ensure that the risk of hearing damage to employees who work with noisy equipment or in a noisy environment, is reduced to a minimum.
- 2.3 The Council also recognises that noise levels below those which cause hearing damage, in offices, for example can still cause hearing problems such as disturbance, interference with communication and stress and will take all reasonable steps to reduce noise levels as far as possible.
- 2.4 The term 'and others' in the policy is interpreted as 'members of the public, contractors and visitors who may be affected by the work activity'.
- 2.5 Specific guidance for managers is attached to this policy document together with Appendix A setting out the responsibilities the employer and employee.
- 2.6 The responsibility for implementing the provisions of this policy and the preparation of an implementation strategy rests with each Director or Head of Service.

POLICY GUIDANCE

3. NOISE ACTION LEVELS

3.1 It is vital to realise that there are three action levels (noise exposure levels), which are of critical importance and form the basis of this policy:

- the 'first action level' is a daily personal noise exposure of 85 dB (A)
- the 'second action level' is a daily personal noise exposure of 90dB(A)
- the 'peak action level' is a peak sound pressure of 200 pascals and is likely to be linked with the use of cartridge tools and similar loud explosive noises.

3.2 'Daily personal noise exposure' can be taken to mean the level of noise to which a person is exposed (taking no account of the effect of any personal ear protection used) over a period of 8 hours.

4. NOISE ASSESSMENT

4.1 When any employee is likely to be exposed to the first action level or above, or to the peak action level or above, a competent person must make a noise assessment which is adequate for the purposes of:

- identifying which of the employees are exposed; and
- providing them with information with regard to the noise to which those employees may be exposed.

4.2 The noise assessment shall be reviewed when:

- there is a reason to suspect that the assessment is no longer valid; or
- there has been a significant change in the work to which the assessment relates

5. RECORDS

Records of the following data will need to be kept:

- noise exposure assessment reports. These should include details of workplaces, areas and jobs assessed and the results of the assessment, when the assessment took place and by whom it was carried out
- actions taken as a result of noise exposure assessments, with dates

- changes in work practices which affect noise exposure levels, e.g. introduction of new machines, layout of machinery, introduction of noise reduction measures, etc.
- the supply of personal ear protection (ear muffs and plugs) and details of its maintenance and replacement
- complaints by employees about the effects of noise
- action taken in respect of such complaints.

6. REDUCTION OF RISK OF DAMAGE TO HEARING

Action to reduce the risk of damage to hearing to employees and others to the lowest level reasonably practicable must be taken.

7. REDUCTION OF NOISE EXPOSURE

Where the noise exposure is likely to be the second action level or above or to the peak action level or above, so far as reasonably practicable (other than by the provision of personal ear protection), the exposure to noise of those employees or others must be reduced.

8. EAR PROTECTION

- 8.1 So far as reasonably practicable, when an employee or others are likely to be exposed to the first action level or above in circumstances where the daily personal noise exposure is likely to be less than 90 dB(A), suitable and sufficient personal ear protectors must be made available to those who request them.
- 8.2 For exposures at or above the second and peak action levels suitable ear protectors must be provided which, when properly worn can be reasonably expected to reduce risk of hearing damage to the employee's hearing to below that arising from exposure to the second action level or, as the case may be, to the peak action level.
- 8.3 It must be emphasised that the use of ear protection should not be regarded as a substitute for noise reduction at source. Ear protection must be regarded as a last resort.

9. EAR PROTECTION ZONES

9.1 Where a premises is deemed an 'ear protection zone', then:-

- (i) each ear protection zone must be marked and identified by means of a sign, complying with the Health and Safety (Safety Signs and Signals) Regulations 1996:-
 - that it is an ear protection zone
 - the need for employees and others to wear suitable personal ear protectors while in that zone
- (ii) that employees or others must not enter that zone unless they are wearing personal ear protectors

9.2 'Ear protection zone' means any part of the premises or site where any person is likely to be exposed to the second action level or above or to the peak action level or above.

10. MAINTENANCE AND USE OF EQUIPMENT

10.1 So far as is practicable, anything provided for the benefit of employees and others in compliance with the duties under this policy is fully and properly used; is maintained in an efficient state, and is in working order and good repair. Records of maintenance and other tests and inspections must be kept.

10.2 All employees must, so far as is practicable, fully and properly use personal ear protectors and any other protective measures when provided by their divisions in compliance with this Policy. If an employee discovers a defect in that equipment, he/she must report it to the manager for action, at once.

10.3 Failure of employees to comply with 10.2, above will be regarded as a serious matter, which may lead to disciplinary action being taken.

11. PROVISION OF INFORMATION, INSTRUCTION AND TRAINING

11.1 All employees who are likely to be exposed to the first action level or above, or to the peak action level or above must be provided with adequate information, instruction and training on:

- the harmful effects of noise
- what steps must be taken by employees to minimise the risks (i.e. to protect themselves)

- the steps employees must take in order to obtain the personal ear protectors
- action that may be taken against any employee who knowingly contravenes the provisions of the policy
- how to report defects in ear protectors and noise control equipment.

12. **COMPETENT PERSONS**

For the purpose of this policy a competent person is one who is able to assess noise, understand instructions and hearing protection as well as their limitations, be able to calculate exposure, record and comment on results

13. **IMPLEMENTATION OF THE POLICY**

It is recommended that:

- each divisions carries out an investigation to find out where noise exposure is likely to be at or above any of the three action levels
- a competent person makes an adequate assessment of those areas likely to be at or above any of the three 'action levels' and prepares and keeps appropriate records
- appropriate action is taken to reduce or where this is not possible, control the exposure to noise
- employees are informed, instructed and trained to keep risks to a minimum
- appropriate systems are introduced to evaluate the operation of the programmes to check that they are working and to ensure any necessary corrective action is taken.

14. **MAIN POINTS TO CONSIDER**

14.1 Whilst accepting that the use of ear protectors by employees may be the only practicable method of controlling noise exposure, a continuing effort must be made to search for and evaluate alternative methods, either by reducing noise levels or by reducing the time that employees are exposed to these levels. The three main features to consider at all times, are the need to continually assess, control and protect as summarised below:

- **assess** - carry out regular assessments of noise exposure to determine the magnitude of the problem

- **control** - continue to explore and evaluate methods of reducing noise levels and/or exposure times in the future in order to find reasonable and practicable alternatives to the use of personal protection
- **protect** - provide employees with suitable and effective ear protectors until alternative reasonably practical methods of controlling noise exposure become available, and provide information, instruction and training to ensure that personal protection is correctly used.

14.2 Procedures for dealing with health and safety issues:

Wherever an employee raises a matter related to noise in the workplace as a health and safety issue, then:

- all necessary steps must be taken to investigate the circumstances
- corrective measures must be taken where appropriate
- advise the employee of actions taken.

14.3 Where a problem arises as a result of noise in the workplace, the employee must inform his/her manager immediately.

15. **ADVICE**

Advice on the implementation of the policy can be obtained from the Health & Safety Team, Human Resources. Telephone (01443) 425536.

APPENDIX A

Action required where LEP,d is likely to be:- (see note 1 below)	below85 dB(A)	85dB(A) First AL	90dB(A) Second AL
EMPLOYERS DUTIES			
General Duty To Reduce Risk Risk of hearing damage to be reduced to the lowest level reasonably practicable.	●	●	(2) ●
Assessment of Noise Exposure Noise Assessments to be made by a competent Person. Record of assessments to be kept until a new one is made.		● ●	● ●
Noise Reduction Reduce exposure to noise as far as is reasonably practicable by means other than ear protectors.			●
Provision of Information to Workers Provide adequate information, instruction and training about risks to hearing, what employees should do to minimise risk, how they can obtain ear protectors if they are exposed between 85 and 90 dB(A), and their obligations under the Regulations. Mark ear protection zones with notices, so far as reasonably practicable		●	● ●
Ear Protectors Ensure so far as is practicable that protectors are: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - provided to employees who ask for them - provided to all exposed - maintained and repaired - used by all exposed Ensure so far as reasonably practicable that all who go into a marked ear protection zone use ear protectors.		● ●	● ● ● ● (3)

Action required where LEP,d is likely to be:- (see note 1 below)	below85 dB(A)	85dB(A) First AL	90dB(A) Second AL
Maintenance and Use of Equipment Ensure so far as is practicable that: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - all equipment provided under the Regulations is used, except for the ear protectors provided between 85 and 90 dB(A). - ensure all equipment is maintained. 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • • 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • •
Use of Equipment So far as practicable: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - use ear protectors - use any other protective equipment - report any defects discovered to his/her manager. 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • • 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • • •
MACHINE MAKER'S AND SUPPLIERS DUTIES Provision of Information Provide information on the noise likely to be generated.		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •

NOTES:

- (1) The dB(A) action levels are values of daily personal exposure to noise (LEP,d)
- (2) All the actions indicated at 90dB(A) are also required where the peak sound pressure is at or above 200 Pascals (140 dB re 20 µPa)
- (3) This requirement applies to all who enter the zones, even if they do not stay long enough to receive an exposure of 90 dB(A) LEP.

MANAGERS CHECKLIST

	✓ As Appropriate		
	N/A	Yes	No
• Have all potentially noisy work activities been identified			
• Has a noise assessment been carried out where employees are likely to be exposed to the 'first action level' or above, or to the 'peak action level' or above?			
• Has action been taken as a result of the assessment to reduce noise levels and/or exposure times to employees and others, so far as is reasonably practicable?			
• Have suitable ear protectors been made 'available' to employees and others who are likely to be exposed to the 'first action level' or above but below the 'second action level'?			
• Are suitable ear protectors 'provided' and worn by employees and others who are likely to be exposed to above the 'second' and 'peak action levels'?			
• Where an 'ear protection' zone has been identified, has the area been clearly marked?			
• Have competent person(s) been designated to carry out noise assessments and make recommendations as a result?			
• Are all ear protectors maintained, kept in good order and to the required standards?			
• Has suitable information, instruction and training been given to employees who are likely to be exposed to the 'first action level' or above, or the 'peak action level' or above?			
• Are appropriate records being kept?			
• Are there monitoring procedures in place to ensure that the requirements of the Policy are being met?			

Completed by: _____

Confirmed by: _____

Name: _____

Name: _____

Designation: _____

Designation: _____

Date: _____

Date: _____