



Control of Noise at Work Policy

March 2012

Reference	Title	Created	Owner	Review
HSWO-	Control of Noise at Work Policy	19.03.2012	Health, Safety and Wellbeing Office HSO-JFC	19.03.2015

1. Introduction

1.1. Noise may interfere with working efficiency by being an annoyance and causing stress; it may directly cause accidents by hindering communication and most importantly can cause damage to hearing. The risk of damage depends on the dose of sound energy received over a period of time. A temporary loss of hearing lasting from a few seconds to a few days may result from exposure to intense noise for a short time. Regular exposure to high noise levels over a long period is much more serious and may result in the destruction of certain inner ear structures and a loss of hearing which is incurable. Indications that someone is developing hearing loss may include

- an inability to hear high-pitched or soft sounds
- trouble understanding conversation in a crowded room
- ringing or whistling in the ears (tinnitus)

1.2. Hearing loss, of course, is not always caused by exposure to noise at work; it is part of the normal ageing process and can also be caused by disease. However, employers must consider the noise to which their employees are exposed during their work and must ensure that measures are taken, if necessary, to reduce the risk.

1.3. It is the policy of the University to put in place measures to protect employees and others who may be exposed, from the risks of noise-induced hearing loss and to comply with the Control of Noise at Work Regulations 2005, the Management of Health and Safety Regulations 1999 and the Health and Safety at Work etc Act 1974.

2. Scope

2.1. This policy applies to all University employees and any person who may be affected by the work activity conducted by the University. This includes students, visitors, contractors and the general public.

working day or week or the maximum noise to which an employee is exposed in a working day.

- 3.4. Maximum Exposure Values – the levels of noise exposure that must not be exceeded
- 3.5. Control Measure – any measure to reduce the risk in the workplace, eg. Standard Operating Procedures, mechanical devices, personal protective equipment, training, restricted access zones
- 3.6. Acoustic Shock – a sudden, unexpected noise event which is perceived as loud, transmitted through a telephone or headset that may cause an adverse reaction
- 3.7. Noisy Work Environment – any working environment that reaches the action levels in 5. Details of Procedure, described below

4.2.6 Have maintenance arrangements that ensure equipment continues to operate properly and does not become noisier over time.

4.2.7 Request a noise survey if there are concerns about noise levels in between scheduled two-yearly surveys.

4.2.8 Provide suitable hearing protection to workers (staff and students), on request, where the personal noise exposure is between the lower and upper exposure action values.

4.2.9 Designate and provide signage for hearing protection zones, where necessary, where exposure to workers (staff and students) is equal to or exceeds the upper exposure action value.

4.2.10 Keep a record of all workers (staff and students) exposed to noise levels exceeding the upper exposure action value.

4.2.11 Inform workers (staff and students) where the personal noise exposure is above the upper exposure action value and provide relevant information.

4.2.12 Provide suitable hearing protection to workers (staff and students) in designated hearing protection zones, and require and supervise its wearing.

4.2.13 Where hearing protection is provided (on request or mandatory), provide suitable training and instruction on correct fitting, maintenance and suitable storage.

4.2.14 Where hearing protection is mandatory, provide suitable supervision to ensure rules are followed and hearing protection is being used properly. Where necessary, the University's disciplinary procedures should be followed.

4.2.15 Refer employees to the Occupational Health Service for health surveillance (hearing checks) if they are likely to be regularly exposed above the upper exposure action values, or are at risk for any reason e.g. they already suffer from hearing loss or are particularly sensitive to damage.

4.3. The Health, Safety & Wellbeing Office will:

4.3.1 Carry out or arrange a noise survey of all relevant areas every two years, or sooner if problems are reported; keep records of all noise surveys undertaken.

4.3.2 Provide survey findings to the relevant Head of the School/Director??? and provide advice on any necessary remedial actions.

4.4.

4.5. Staff must:

4.5.1 Use hearing protection provided for mandatory use in designated hearing protection zones.

4.5.2 Attend health surveillance (hearing checks) if requested to do so by the Occupational Health Service.

4.6. Students are required to:

4.6.1 Use hearing protection provided for mandatory use in designated hearing protection zones.

5. Details of procedure/operational details

Action Levels

- 5.1. The Control of Noise at Work Regulations require the University to take specific action at certain levels of noise exposure. These relate to the levels of exposure averaged over a working day or week and the maximum noise (peak sound

