

Guidance Note On Noise

Introduction

Noise is defined as 'an irritating, unwanted sound'; music is perceived as pleasant but can sometimes be loud to produce its effect, while the sound of a jet engine, for example, is regarded as unpleasant. However, both are physically the same thing as far as the ear is concerned. If a sound level is too high or carries on for too long, your hearing will be damaged.

Who's Responsible?

Head teacher

The primary responsibility for complying with the Noise Regulations rests with the Head teacher. The Head teacher must:

- Assess the risks to employees from noise at work;
- Take action to reduce the noise exposure that produces those risks;
- Provide employees with hearing protection if the noise exposure cannot be reduced enough by using other methods;
- Make sure the legal limits on noise exposure are not exceeded;
- Provide employees with information, instruction and training. It is important that employees understand that the Noise Regulations also apply to them;
- Carry out health surveillance where there is a risk to health.

Staff / pupils

Staff / pupils also have responsibilities under the Noise Regulations to:

- Use control measures in accordance with their employer's instructions;
- Wear hearing protection in accordance with their employer's instructions;
- Take care of hearing protectors and noise-control equipment;
- Report faults and difficulties in using noise-control equipment;
- Make themselves available for health surveillance.

Good Practice in assessing

Identifying a noise problem

This will depend on how loud the noise is and how long people are exposed to it, as a simple guide you will probably need to do something about the noise if any of the following apply:

- Is the noise intrusive - like a busy street, a vacuum cleaner or a crowded restaurant - for most of the working day?
- Do your employees have to raise their voices to carry out a normal conversation when about 2 m apart for at least part of the day?
- Do your employees use noisy powered tools or machinery for more than half an hour each day?

If any of the above applies a noise level assessment should be conducted.

Reduce the noise

There are many ways of reducing noise and noise exposure, such methods include:

- Use a different, quieter process or quieter equipment
- Design and lay out the workplace for low noise emission by:
 - Use of absorptive materials within the building to reduce reflected sound, eg open cell foam or mineral wool.
 - Keep noisy machinery and processes away from quieter areas
- Limit the time spent in noisy areas
- Isolate vibrating machinery or components from their surroundings
- Provide information, instruction and training to all the effected employees
- As a last resort provide hearing protection

Follow guidelines in Regulations

Please follow link

<http://www.hse.gov.uk/noise/index.htm>

Music lesson Noise

There are various methods of reducing the impact of noise during classroom teaching or work:

- Reduce the time exposed to noise.
- When using keyboards during general class music teaching, instruct the students to maintain the lowest possible volume unless demonstrating or performing to the class. Headphones can also be used to reduce class exposure, but these should be fitted with noise limiters.

- When using percussion instruments in classroom situations, consider using softer beaters as a way of reducing noise levels, particularly in practice or rehearsal situations.
- Listen to recorded music at moderate volume.
- As the last resort, consider the use of hearing protection for both teachers and students to protect hearing during 'loud' lessons.

Further Advice

For further advice and guidance please contact the Education Health and Safety team on:

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