

Health, Safety and Wellbeing Management Arrangements

Core | Consider | Complex

Noise in the Workplace



2018-2019

Fierté Multi Academy Trust

Health, Safety and Wellbeing Service



1. Success Indicators

The following indicators will demonstrate the level of compliance

- a) Line Managers and Premise Managers identify areas or work activities where initial assessments are required.
- b) Where initial assessments indicate that a full assessment is required an assessment has been undertaken and employees informed of the results.
- c) Where assessment indicates that an exposure action level has been reached appropriate control measures are in place and monitored for effectiveness.
- d) Managers are aware of their duties to provide suitable hearing protection where necessary and to enforce the wearing of hearing protection where employees are exposed at or above the upper exposure action level.
- e) Employees are aware of their duties to wear hearing protection, use any noise reducing equipment installed and report any defects in hearing protection equipment or equipment installed to reduce noise.
- f) Suitable information, instruction and training about noise and how to protect hearing is provided to employees who work in noisy environments
- g) Health surveillance is undertaken for those who are exposed to noise at or above the lower exposure action level at least every three years

2. Overview

Managers and premises managers have a legal duty to identify areas and activities where assessment of noise levels is required and manage any required control measures. Design and engineering controls must be used to reduce noise production and exposure to noise so far as reasonably practicable rather than the use personal protective equipment such as hearing protection.

3. Health, Safety and Wellbeing Management Arrangements

These arrangements will apply to employees and contractors working on county council premises or when engaged in county council activities.

3.1 Initial assessment

The initial noise assessment will identify if a workplace or work activity requires a full noise assessment. Where Managers and Premise Managers identify that an activity or workplace requires an initial noise assessment this should be recorded on HSF63.

The initial assessment should consider the following indicators:

- The need to raise the voice to be heard by someone two metres away for at least part of the day.
- There is use of noisy powered tools or machinery for more than half an hour a day.
- The work involves causing impacts such as hammering, pneumatic impact tools etc.
- The work involves explosive sources such as cartridge-operated tools or detonators,
- Individuals are surrounded by intrusive noise for **most of the day**.

Where the work environment or work activities involve any of the above points then a full assessment will be required and the manager should contact the Health, Safety & Wellbeing Service as soon as possible so that arrangements can be made for a full noise assessment to be undertaken.

If the assessment indicates that it is unlikely that the noise for the workplace or work activity will require a full assessment this should be recorded. The assessment should be reviewed if the workplace or activity changes in a manner that might increase the exposure to noise in any way e.g. individuals work closer to noisy equipment, use equipment for longer periods of time or additional equipment is introduced to the workplace.

If the noise produced is not sufficient to require a full assessment it is good practice to ensure that the exposure to noise reduced as far as reasonably practicable.

3.2 Full assessment

Where an initial assessment identifies that a full assessment is necessary the manager, with support from the Health, Safety & Wellbeing Service shall arrange for a competent person to undertake an assessment in a manner that complies with the requirements of the Control of Noise at Work Regulations.

Summary Chart of Levels and Actions

| | Noise exposure | Actions required | Employee Action |
|------------------------------------|---|---|--|
| Lower exposure action level | daily or weekly personal noise exposure of 80dB(A) or peak sound pressure 135dB(C) | Reduce noise so far as is reasonably practicable. Provide hearing protection on request to employees if the noise cannot be reduced below this level. | Co-operate with the introduction of any noise reduction measures. |
| Upper exposure action level | daily or weekly personal noise exposure of 85dB(A) or peak sound pressure of 137dB(C) | Provide suitable hearing protection as an interim measure or if the noise exposure cannot be reduced below this level. Reduce the noise exposure by means other than hearing protection so far as is reasonably practical. Designate workplaces and activities as hearing protection zones. | Employees MUST wear hearing protection equipment. Report any defects or loss of Hearing Protection Equipment. Co-operate with Health Surveillance. |
| Exposure limit value | daily or weekly personal noise exposure of 87dB(A) or peak sound pressure of 140dB(C) | Cease activity/ use of equipment which is source of noise exposure. Reduce noise to below the exposure limit value. | |

3.3 Control Measures

Noise in all workplaces and as a result of all work activities should be at a level which is as low as reasonably practicable.

When an assessment indicates that noise is above any exposure limit, control measures should be introduced to reduce the noise as far as is reasonably practicable and where possible below the lower exposure limit value. Hearing protection should be considered an interim control measure until other control measures to reduce the noise exposure have been identified and implemented. The preferred outcome is to lower the noise exposure to a level where hearing protection is not required.

After the control measures have been implemented an assessment should be undertaken to identify the effectiveness of the controls and to ensure that adequate reductions in the exposure levels have been achieved.

Hearing Protection

Hearing protectors are Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) and as with all PPE these should be used as a last resort and the risk, i.e. the noise, should be reduced as far as possible by other means.

Hearing Protection Zones

Following a full assessment by a competent person a Hearing Protection Zone may be identified or where the equipment is mobile the activity may be a Hearing Protection Zone. These are areas or activities where exposure to noise is above the upper action value of 85dB(A) and for which wearing hearing protection is compulsory. If an area is identified in this manner it must be clearly marked "Ear Protection Zone" or if this is not possible those undertaking the work activity must be informed in writing of the procedure. Managers must ensure that the hearing protection provided is worn in Hearing Protection Zones and employees failing to wear hearing protection in these areas subject to disciplinary action.

3.4 Health surveillance

Where an employee is exposed to noise levels at or above the lower exposure action values Occupational Health will ensure that their hearing will be monitored on a regular basis. This will normally be annually for the first two years of employment in the role that exposes them to the noise and then at three-yearly intervals.

Initial Health Screening

Where it is identified that a role involves working in an environment which is above the lower action level, managers must inform the Occupational Health Unit and ensure that arrangements are made for the individual who is employed in the role to have their hearing assessed within two months of taking up employment. Having a baseline for individuals will help effective monitoring of any impact that noise is having on the hearing.

3.5 Purchase and Hire of Equipment

All Managers and Premise Managers should consider the level of noise that may be produced by a piece of equipment before hiring or purchasing equipment. Those responsible for the purchasing of equipment should consider manufacturer's information regarding noise levels from equipment. Noise levels from equipment may vary from that provided by the Manufacturer depending on

location and use of the equipment. Equipment of a non-commercial nature such as that which may be purchased from DIY stores may produce significantly higher levels of noise than that designed for commercial use.

Suppliers of hire equipment are required to provide information regarding the noise levels that may be produced by equipment prior to the completion of an agreement. An assessment of the noise produced by the equipment when on site should be undertaken and appropriate action taken. Instructions and guidelines for control measures regarding noise provided by the supplier and/or manufacturer should be noted and normally regarded as minimum precautions.

Contractors

Information must be provided to contractors regarding the levels of noise to which they may be exposed to on site or working near noisy activities, particularly if they will be accessing or working in Hearing Protection Zones. Use of equipment or powered tools by contractors in Hearing Protection Zones should be considered carefully as additional noise sources may result in noise exposure above the Exposure Limit Value. A Control of Contractors - Hazard Exchange Form HSF46 should be used to ensure that information is effectively communicated.

4. Information, Training and Instruction

Employees who are or may be exposed to the noise which has been assessed must be informed of the findings of the assessment.

Managers must ensure that employees have suitable and sufficient training regarding noise to which they may be exposed and associated control measures. Where an employee is exposed to noise above the lower exposure action limit this should include the correct use of the hearing protection which has been selected for them. Information, instruction and training will be considered adequate where it enables the wearer to know:-

- the risk or risks which the personal protective equipment will avoid or limit;
- the purpose for which and the manner in which personal protective equipment is to be used; and
- any action to be taken by the employer and employee to ensure that the personal protective equipment remains in an efficient state, in efficient working order and in good repair as required by these arrangements.

The instruction and training provided to employees should be recorded by managers.

5. HSW Supporting Information

-Guidance on Personal Protective Equipment