

Information Sheet 012

Summary of the changes introduced by new Noise Regulations 2005

These regulations are likely to come into effect in February 2006, there will be no 'grace' period, and compliance will need to be immediate (unless in the music or entertainment sectors which must comply by February 2008). The new regulations will replace the existing Noise at Work Regulations 1989.

The Regulations implement the Physical Agents (Noise) Directive (2003/10/EC)

The consultation document in full can be found at <http://www.hse.gov.uk/consult/condocs/cd196.pdf>

The Regulations have not yet been issued so are subject to change but the below report summarises the likely changes.

The main changes are the reduction in 5dB of the exposure levels at which action has to be taken, the introduction of a new exposure limit value and a specific requirement of health surveillance.

A summary of the main changes is as below:

Exposure Limits

- The lower exposure action values reduced to – a daily or weekly personal noise exposure ($L_{EP,d}$) of 80dB(A) and a peak sound pressure of 135 dB(C). [Reduced from 85dB(A)]
- The upper exposure action values reduced to – a daily or weekly personal noise exposure ($L_{EP,d}$) of 85dB(A) and a peak sound pressure of 137 dB(C). [Reduced from 90dB(A)]
- The introduction of an exposure limit value – a daily or weekly personal noise exposure ($L_{EP,d}$) of 87dB(A) and a peak sound pressure of 140 dB(C).

In the case of the exposure action values the daily noise exposure takes no account of any hearing protection worn. In the case of the exposure limit value the attenuation provided by hearing protection is taken into account.

Health Surveillance

- Health surveillance must be introduced where a risk is identified. The Regulations will suggest that health surveillance (in this case audiometry) should be available for all those regularly exposed to 85dB(A) and where a risk is identified to those who are exposed to 80dB(A). There is currently some discussion as to who is required to do this audiometry. It is suggested that it doesn't have to be done by an Occupational nurse / physician, that a suitably trained person could do it who is able to refer on to an Occupational nurse/physician if a further problem is identified.

The table below summarises the changes

Requirement	1989 Regs	2005 Regs
Hearing Protection to be made available	85dB(A)	80dB(A)
Hearing protection to be enforced	90dB(A)	85dB(A)
Exposure limit	N/A	87dB(A)
Assessment period	8 hours	8 hours or one week
Hearing protection zones to be identified	90dB(A)	85dB(A)
Health surveillance to be provided		At 85dB(A) or lower where risk is shown
Receive information	85dB(A)	80dB(A)
Programme of measures to	90dB(A)	85dB(A)



be implemented		
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Last revised on: 21st June 2005