



How to manage noise as a safety hazard

Noise-induced hearing loss is one of the most common occupational health issues. Every year thousands of workers are exposed to workplace noise hazards that result in preventable hearing loss.

Noise in the workplace can also be highly distracting, limit communication, affect safety as well as reduce individuals work performance and overall productivity.

Exposure to excessive noise levels can cause permanent hearing damage that cannot be corrected by surgery or a hearing aid. Even short-term exposure to loud noise can cause a temporary change in hearing. Short-term effects such as ringing in the ears may go away after leaving the noisy area.

However, repeated exposure to noise hazards can lead to permanent tinnitus or hearing loss.

In addition to hearing damage, noise hazards can:

- ▶ Create physical and psychological stress
- ▶ Reduce productivity
- ▶ Interfere with communication and concentration
- ▶ Contribute to workplace accidents and injuries by making it difficult to hear warning signals or instruction.

Reducing noise levels at the source provides the most effective way of protecting workers' hearing as well as providing numerous other benefits to the workplace.

Decibel levels of common sounds



140dB

30 metres from
a jet aircraft



110dB

Chainsaw



100dB

Disco



80dB

Kerbside of a
busy road



30dB

Quiet bedroom
at night

WA Legislation

In Western Australia, the exposure standard for noise set in the *Occupational Safety and Health Regulations 1996* is:

- ▶ A daily noise exposure level of 85 dBA (over an 8 hour period); or
- ▶ A peak noise level of 140 dBC

The *Workers' Compensation and Injury Management Act 1981* sets out the requirements for audiometric testing of workers who work in a prescribed workplace. A prescribed workplace is a workplace where a worker is receiving or likely to receive a noise level of:

- ▶ An L peak of 140 dB (lin) or
- ▶ A representative LAeq, 8h of 90 dB (A)

Conducting a noise assessment will determine if work areas and activities fall into the category of a prescribed workplace.



How can LGIS assist?

LGIS has approved noise officers who specialise in conducting noise and exposure assessments in all workplace environments. You will receive a tailored report outlining the findings, and recommendations. In addition, LGIS can assist in the development of supporting plans, policies and procedures.

If you would like further information please contact the risk and governance team on (08) 9483 8888.



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