



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.

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 within the workplace 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.

Do I have a noisy workplace?

A person conducting a business or undertaking (PCBU) must ensure that the noise a worker is exposed to at the workplace, does not exceed the exposure standard for noise as set out in the *Work Health and Safety (General) Regulations 2022*:

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

From the 31 March 2024, the *Work Health and Safety (General) Regulations 2022* will also require for a PCBU's to provide audiometric testing to their workers who are frequently exposed to excessive noise and are required to wear PPE to protect them from the risk of hearing loss. Audiometric testing must be provided within the first 3 months of a worker commencing and at least every 2 years.



Decibel levels of common sounds

Common outdoor sound levels

Common indoor sound levels

Noise Level dB(A)

	Car horn at 1 mtr.	110	Rock band	
	Gas lawn mower at 1 mtr. Diesel truck at 45 mtrs.	100	Forklift or subway train	
		90	Food blender at 1 mtr.	
		80	Garbage disposal at 1 mtr. Shouting at 1 mtr.	
	Noisy urban road		Vacuum cleaner at 3 mtrs.	
	Busy freeway at 15 mtrs.	70		
	Commercial area	60	Normal speech at 1 mtr.	
	Quiet urban road	50	Large business office dishwasher next room	
	Quiet rural road	40	Small theatre, large conference room (background)	
		30	Library Bedroom at night Concert hall (background)	
		20	Broadcast & recording studio	
		10	Threshold of hearing	
		0		

How can LGIS assist?

If you would like further information please contact the People risk team on (08) 9483 8888 or peoplerisk@lgiswa.com.au.