



LEGAL DUTIES

This section will help you to understand your duties in managing the risk associated with noise at work.

What does the law say you have to do?

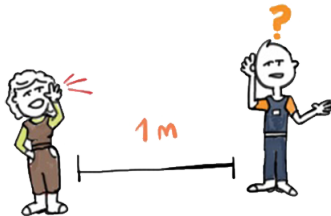
There are specific laws and regulations that require you to manage the risk of exposure to noise at work.

Maintain appropriate noise levels

You must, so far as is reasonably practicable, make sure that none of your workers (or people that visit your workplace) are exposed to noise levels:

- equivalent to 85 decibels averaged over 8 hours, or
- a peak noise level over 140 decibels.

This always applies, whether or not your workers are wearing hearing protection. A good indicator that the noise in your workplace may be harmful is if workers have to raise their voices to talk to someone 1 m away.



If you are unsure if the noise levels in your work are harmful, ask a competent person (someone who has the knowledge, skills and experience in appropriate techniques, procedures and interpreting results) to come in and complete a detailed noise assessment. A list of competent people can be found [here](#)

Note: Where shifts are longer than 8 hours, you should engage a competent person to determine the equivalent noise exposure that would occur over 8 hours.

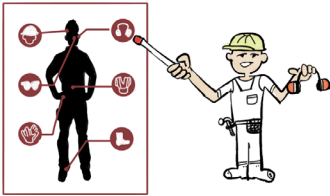
Provide a safe and healthy environment at work

First, you must try to eliminate the source of noise, for example, by removing the noisy machinery from your work, or by choosing quieter equipment.

If you're not reasonably able to, then you need to consider what you can do to minimise the risk of noise. Some ways you can do this are:

- separating the noisy machinery from where your workers are
- using barriers to block the path of the noise
- using silencers or noise insulated equipment
- limiting the time your workers spend in noisy areas by rotating tasks or shifts.





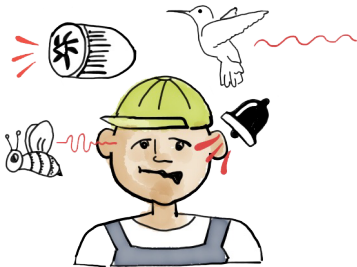
Train your workers

Find out what your workers already know about noise, and make sure they understand that once hearing is lost, it won't come back. Talk to workers about how noise could harm them, and how to identify hazardous noise sources. Continually address gaps in workers knowledge by providing ongoing training. Remind your workers about safe practices to protect their hearing.



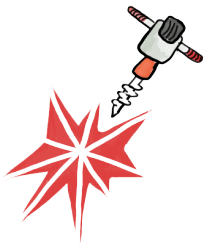
Provide hearing protection

Make sure your workers always wear hearing protection if it's needed. Remember, hearing protection is the least effective control measure, and should only be considered after you have tried to eliminate or minimise the noise risk. Train your workers on when and how to use, fit, care for and maintain their hearing protection correctly. You must pay for hearing protection, including maintenance and replacement.



Monitor the health of your workers

Arrange audiometry tests with an occupational health practitioner for workers exposed to harmful levels of noise. Make sure your workers understand the results of any health monitoring tests, and actions required from this. A list of occupational health nurses can be found [here](#)



Monitor the noise levels at work

A competent person will be able to tell you if a detailed noise assessment is needed. This will identify noise sources and high-risk areas and tasks at your work. Talk with your workers about the results from testing noise levels during work.



Seek your workers views when managing the risks associated with noise

Encourage workers to identify and report any concerns. Regularly review work activities with them to identify new risks and ways to deal with them. Change the work environment and methods or equipment used where necessary. Have clear, effective, and on-going ways for workers to suggest improvements or raise concerns about noise risks on a day-to-day basis. Engage with your workers on issues or concerns regarding their hearing.