

TBT0014	NOISE & HEARING PROTECTION		
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Introduction There is no satisfactory treatment for noise-induced hearing loss. Once you're deaf, you stay deaf. Noise in the workplace has to be controlled, so that it will not cause hearing damage or long term hearing loss to the operatives or staff that use noisy equipment. A simple test for you to identify when noise may be causing a problem is to use the 2 metre rule. If you have to shout to carry out a normal conversation within 2 metres or less then suitable hearing protection should be worn.
Main Points • Precast machines, compressors, concrete mixers, circular saws, breakers, chainsaws, generators, vibrating rollers and excavators etc. can all damage your hearing. • You do not have to be using noisy equipment to be affected by it, just be in the vicinity. • If you have to shout to be heard then the noise level can be regarded as high enough to warrant the wearing of ear protection. • It's not only on site that you have to remember to protect your hearing but also after work – e.g. using a lawnmower, loud music etc. Legislation: The Noise at Work Regulations state that certain actions must be taken when the noise is at these levels: Lower Action Value <u>80 dB(A) Lepd</u> • Risk assessment • Plan of action and action • Hearing protection to be available • Information and training Upper Action Level <u>85 dB(A) Lepd</u> • Technical/organisational measures • Mark and identify areas, restricting, limiting access • Mandatory use of hearing protectors • Health surveillance Limit value, <u>87 dB(A) Lepd</u> The limit for personal exposure, taking into account the reduction afforded by hearing protection. Employees Duties: • Wear ear protection (ear muffs or ear plugs) provided (in the absence of or pending noise control) whenever you are exposed at or above the second or peak action levels, as well as when entering an ear protection zone, to meet your duties under the Noise At Work Regulations. • Use any other equipment your employer provides under these Regulations, e.g. machines fitted with silencers - don't remove them!

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- Take care of equipment provided under these Regulations. If you discover any defects reducing their performance, you should report them!
- See your doctor if you think that your hearing has become damaged

Complying with these rules will help you to use equipment that exceeds the 80 decibels in a safe and correct manner.

Hearing Protection:

- Ear Protection **must be in place before entering** into the ear protection area/zone.
- Wear ear protection at all times when exposed to a noise hazard (obey noise hazard warning signs).
- Wear proper ear protection and wear it properly (i.e. cotton wool is no good for ear protection and ear muffs are no good worn over a balaclava).
- If ear plugs are used ensure they are a good fit, fitted properly, and are kept clean.
- Use disposable ear plugs only the once.
- Keep reusable ear plugs clean.
- Ear muffs must be a good fit, particularly where the seal fits the head, and must be worn the correct way around.
- Ensure hands are clean when handling all types of ear protection, and store ear protection in a clean environment.
- **DO NOT** alter pressure of ear defenders by bending the band.
- Report any damaged, lost or unserviceable ear protection immediately.
- Consider options for reducing noise in the workplace, i.e. turn off unused machinery, keep precast machine, cement mixer and compressor covers closed, ensure air lines do not leak, fit mufflers to tools where applicable, move noise source away, shield noise source, etc.

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