

THE FACTS

UNSAFE NOISE LEVELS AT WORK CAN LEAD TO PERMANENT, IRREVERSIBLE HEARING LOSS.

NEARLY 50% OF WORKERS' COMPENSATION CLAIMS FOR HEARING LOSS COME FROM AMWU INDUSTRIES.

AT 85 DBA NEARLY 1 IN 5 WORKERS WILL SUFFER HEARING LOSS OVER THE COURSE OF THEIR WORKING LIFE.

High levels of noise are more dangerous when there is also exposure to vibration and certain chemicals. Persistent noise stress can increase the risk of fatigue, high blood pressure and heart disease.

THE LAW

A PERSON CANNOT BE EXPOSED TO NOISE LEVELS ABOVE THE EXPOSURE STANDARD, WHICH IS 85dBA OVER 8 HOURS.

Note: A short blast of very loud noise will be just as harmful as sustained exposure to a mid level noise.

MOST WORKPLACES RELY ON HEARING PROTECTION BUT THE LAW SAYS THAT RISK NEEDS TO BE REDUCED BY:

- Designing out exposure to noise
- Buying quiet equipment and installing machinery/equipment in quiet places

WORKPLACES ARE THEN OBLIGED TO APPLY A HIERARCHY OF PROTECTION:

- Isolate the hazards from people
- Engineer out the hazards
- Implement administrative controls
- If a risk still remains, use hearing protection - muffs or plugs.

WHAT CAN HEALTH & SAFETY REPRESENTATIVES DO?

H&S REPS HAVE THE RIGHT TO:

- Routinely inspect the workplace – after giving reasonable notice, i.e. 24 hours
- Request a review of any risk control measures
- Be consulted about health and safety matters that affect members of the work group
- Discuss health and safety matters with employers
- Get assistance from outside the workplace.

Employers must consult with workers and H&S Reps about health and safety matters.

CHECKING THE NOISE LEVELS AT WORK

H&S Reps use your rights. Request paid time to check the noise levels and discuss noise matters with members of your work group.

HOW TO MEASURE NOISE AT WORK

CONSIDER THE VARIOUS PARTS OF YOUR WORKPLACE. WHICH PLACES MIGHT BE NOISE-AFFECTED?

DOWNLOAD A NOISE LEVEL APP ON A SMARTPHONE.

In some workplaces the use of mobile phones is restricted, so be sure to get the OK to use your phone for measuring noise levels. *There are free noise measuring apps available for download from both Apple and Android app stores.*



for Android phones, go to the Google Play Store 'Sound Meter'



for iPhone phones, go to the App Store, and search 'Decibel 10th' or 'Decibel Meter'