



LEIA Safety Information Sheet

NOISE AT WORK

Prepared by the LEIA Safety and Environment Committee



Contents

| | |
|---|---|
| PREAMBLE..... | 3 |
| BACKGROUND..... | 3 |
| Actions to be Taken by Companies/Individuals..... | 3 |
| Noise Risk Assessment..... | 4 |
| REFERENCES..... | 5 |

PREAMBLE

This Information Sheet is one of a series produced by the LEIA Safety and Environment Committee on topics relevant to the Lift and Escalator Industry. Whilst every effort has been taken in the production of these sheets, it must be acknowledged that they should be read in conjunction with the relevant legislation, codes of practice etc. They should not be taken as an authoritative interpretation of the law but guidance to it.

BACKGROUND

The Control of Noise at Work Regulations 2005 requires employers to prevent or reduce the risk to employee's health and safety from exposure to Noise at Work. Companies should be aware that exposure to excessive noise may result in temporary and/or permanent damage or loss of hearing.

Assessments by employers must be carried out to ensure that the risk from the exposure to noise is either eliminated at source or, where this is not reasonably practicable reduced to as low a level as reasonably practicable regardless of the level. When required, personal hearing protective equipment (PPE) may be provided as a short-term measure to control the risk.

Hearing loss cannot be seen or easily measured, and the results are permanent to the individual.

Actions to be Taken by Companies/Individuals

The Noise at Work Regulations specifies two levels whereby companies and individuals must take specific action. At the lower exposure level of 80dB, suitable hearing protection must be available for all individuals to wear. At the upper exposure level of 85dB all persons working in, or passing through the area must wear suitable hearing protection.

So without specialist noise measuring equipment, how can you measure the noise in a working area? As a rule of thumb, if you have to raise your voice to have a normal conversation when stood beside the other person, you should be wearing hearing protection. This is of course not scientific, and is no guarantee of the noise level, but it is a useful guide as to when to step away from an area or piece of machinery, and to arrange for Noise Risk Assessment to be completed.

Companies will need to ensure that any new equipment purchased is provided with a Declaration of Conformity to show that it meets essential health and safety requirements, e.g. British and European Standards, and is supplied with all relevant documentation for safe working, including relevant information on noise that will be produced during normal use. Where appropriate a specific noise assessment, and advice on the appropriate control measures must be given; this could be the use of sound barriers, enclosures or hearing protection.

Where appropriate a specific noise assessment must be carried out, and advice on the correct control measures, given. Employees must be given the relevant information, instruction and training to carry out their work safely, and they should be supervised by a competent person to ensure that the control measures are maintained throughout.

If hearing protection is to be recommended, then appropriate signage must be displayed to warn persons who are to enter the area, and the appropriate hearing protection supplied for them to wear. As with all PPE, training must be given as to the correct use of the PPE.

Companies are advised to carry out individual health surveillance checks where there is a risk to health. Follow-up actions include carrying out an audit/inspection at sites that are identified as hazardous to verify that the control measures are being implemented and maintained.

It is the employer's responsibility, with the assistance of their managers and supervisors, to ensure that suitable noise assessments have been carried out, and that suitable and sufficient control measures are implemented. All personnel who may be exposed to significant levels of noise must be informed of the hazards and the control measures, i.e. the wearing of hearing protection.

Noise Risk Assessment

Note:

The Noise Regulations require specific action values and these relate to:

- The levels of exposure to noise of employees averaged over a working day or week: and the
- Maximum noise (peak sound pressure) to which employees are exposed to in a working day

The values are:

- Lower exposure action values:-
 - Daily or weekly exposure of 80 dB
 - Peak sound pressure of 135 dB
- Upper exposure action values:-
 - Daily or weekly exposure of 85 dB
 - Peak sound pressure of 137 dB

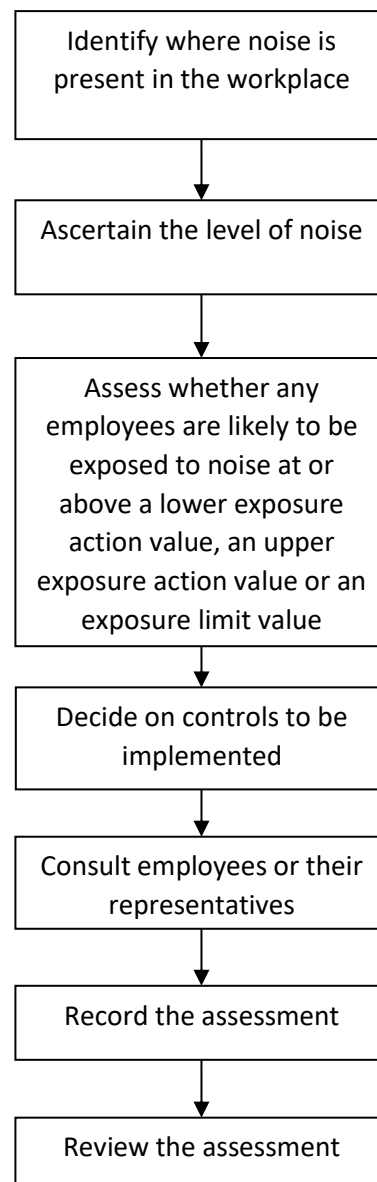
In determining noise exposure in relation to the upper and lower exposure action values, no allowance should be made for the effects of hearing protection

The following levels of noise exposure must not be exceeded:

Daily or weekly exposure of 87 dB

Peak sound pressure of 140 dB

When identifying the above exposure limits, account can be taken of any reduction in exposure provided by



****NOTE – In common with all other assessments, when a significant risk is identified, then the assessment must be recorded ****

At lower exposure levels the employer is obliged to having hearing protection available, to provide to employees and visitors if they ask for them.

If the noise exceeds the upper exposure action level, then the employer must provide all employees and visitors with hearing protection, and ensure that it is used.

The employer must also identify hearing protection zones i.e. areas where hearing protection must be worn, and mark them with appropriate signage. Employees and visitors must also be provided with training and information about how to use and take care of their hearing protectors.

REFERENCES

HSE Controlling noise at work: The Control of Noise at Work Regulations 2005 - Guidance on Regulations L108, (Second edition, published 2005)

<http://www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/priced/l108.pdf>

HSE Noise at work - A brief guide to controlling the risks INDG362(rev2), published 11/12

<http://www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/indg362.pdf>

Exposure calculators and Ready-reckoners (HSE)

<http://www.hse.gov.uk/noise/calculator.htm>