

Introduction

Noise is part of everyday life, but too much noise can cause permanent and disabling hearing damage. This might be hearing loss that gets worse over time, damage caused by sudden, extremely loud noises, or tinnitus (permanent ringing in the ears).

Damaged hearing may make conversations more difficult or impossible. Your family might complain about the television being too loud or you might have trouble using the telephone. It might also affect your sleep.

Is there a noise problem where I work?

If any of the following apply, your employer might be expected to be doing something about noise:

- the noise is intrusive – like a busy street, a vacuum cleaner or a crowded restaurant.
- you must raise your voice to have a normal conversation when about 2m apart.
- you regularly use noisy powered tools or machinery.
- the type of work is known to have noisy tasks, e.g., construction, demolition or road repair, woodworking, plastics processing, engineering, textile manufacture, general fabrication, forging or stamping, paper or board making, canning or bottling, foundry work, waste and recycling.
- there are noises because of impacts (such as hammering, drop forging, pneumatic impact tools etc), explosive sources such as cartridge-operated tools or detonators, or guns.

Another sign that something should be done about the noise is having muffled hearing at the end of the day, even if it is better by the next morning. If you have any ear or hearing trouble, let your employer know.

What does my employer have to do?

Your employer should be looking at:

- using quieter equipment or a different, quieter process.
- engineering/technical changes to reduce the noise at source.
- using screens, barriers, enclosures, or absorbent materials.
- laying out of the workplace to create quiet workstations.
- improved ways of working to reduce noise levels.
- limiting the time spent in noisy areas.

What must I do?

Co-operate: Help your employer to do what is needed to protect your hearing. Make use of any noise-control devices and follow any in-place working methods.

Wear any hearing protection you are given: Wear it properly (you should be trained how to do this), and make sure you wear it all the time when you are doing noisy work or in hearing protection zones.

Look after your hearing protection: Your employer should tell you how to look after it and where you can get it from. Make sure you understand what you need to do.

Attend for your hearing checks: It is in your interest that any signs of damage to your hearing are detected as soon as possible.

Report any problems: Report any problems with noise-control devices or your hearing protection straight away.



Information in this leaflet is based on HSE document *indg363 – rev2*.

The original document can be found here:

<https://www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/indg363.pdf>

A copy of this information leaflet can be downloaded from:

<https://mohs.co.uk/>

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23.7 Noise at Work - A Guide for Exposed Workers



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