



WHS-PRO-028

Noise Management Procedure

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PURPOSE

The purpose of this procedure is to ensure occupational and environmental noise is monitored, the hazards identified are measured where possible, assessed and effective control measures implemented, such that statutory requirements are complied with and the organisation's standards met.

SCOPE

Sydney Harbour Federation Trust has specific obligations under the WHS Regulations to manage the risks of hearing loss associated with noise at the workplace.

REFERENCES

- AS/NZS 4801:2001 OH&S Management Systems – 4.4.6 Hazard Identification, Hazard/Risk Assessment and Control of Hazards
- WHS Regulation 2011 – Chapter 4 Hazardous Work, Part 4.1 Noise
- Safe Work Australia - Code of Practice – Managing Noise and Preventing Hearing Loss at Work

DEFINITIONS

Administrative Controls

Means systems of work that substantially reduce the exposure of employees to noise including reduction in exposure time but does not include engineering controls and hearing protection devices.

Engineering Controls

Means any engineering procedure that reduces the sound level either at the source of the noise or in its transmission but does not include the use of a hearing protection device.

Hearing Protection Device

Means a device or pair of devices worn by a person or inserted in the ears of a person to reduce noise exposure.

Manager

For the purposes of this procedure, the term 'manager' refers to either the Building and Site Services Manager, Projects Manager, or the Volunteer Manager. The manager responsible will be dependent on the site on which the works are being undertaken

Ototoxic Substances

Substances that result in hearing loss and/or ear damage.

FORMS

- [WHS-FOR-028.1 Noise Hazard Identification Checklist](#)

ACTIONS AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Identifying a Noise Hazard

- Once a noise hazard has been reported or identified, the Manager and staff should use the **WHS-FOR-028.1 Noise Hazard Identification Checklist** to help identify if any noise processes and tasks exist that require risk assessment and control.
- This should be done by inspection of the workplace and reviewing information supplied by manufacturers or suppliers.

Noise Assessment

- A noise assessment should be done by a competent person in accordance with the procedures in AS/NZS 1269.1 Measurement and assessment of noise emission and exposure.
- A competent person is one who has accurately calibrated noise measuring instruments and, has an understanding of the WHS regulations for noise requirements, knows how to check the performance of instruments, how to take measurements properly and can interpret the results of the noise measurements.
- A noise assessment report should be used to select appropriate control measures. The main findings should be included in training for all employees.

Controls

- A requirement of the WHS Regulations is to work through a hierarchy of control to choose the control measure that most effectively eliminates or minimises the risk in the circumstances.
- The hierarchy ranks the ways of controlling the risk of hearing loss from noise from the highest level of protection and reliability to the lowest so that the most effective controls are considered first.
- Effective risk control may involve a single control measure or a combination of two or more different controls.
- The most effective control measure is to eliminate the source of noise completely, for example by ceasing to use a noisy machine, changing the way work is carried out so hazardous noise is not produced or by not introducing the hazard into the workplace.

Administrative Controls

- Administrative noise control measures reduce the amount of noise to which a person is exposed by reducing the time they are exposed to it. Examples include:
 - Organising schedules so that noisy work is done when only a few employees are present
 - Sending Disruption Notices notifying employees and others in advance of noisy work so they can limit their exposure to it
 - Keeping employees out of noisy areas if their work does not require them to be there
 - Sign-posting noisy areas and restricting access.

Personal Hearing Protectors

- Personal hearing protectors, such as ear-muffs or ear-plugs, should be used in the following circumstances:
 - when the risks arising from exposure to noise cannot be eliminated or minimised by other more effective control measures,
 - as an interim measure until other control measures are implemented
 - where extra protection is needed above what has been achieved using other noise control measures.
- If the use of personal hearing protectors is necessary, it is important that the hearing protectors are worn throughout the period of exposure to noise.
- Areas where people may be exposed to hazardous noise should be sign-posted as hearing protector areas and the boundaries of these areas should be clearly defined.
- Where sign-posting is not practicable, you should make other arrangements to ensure that employees and others know when personal hearing protectors are required.

Audiometric Testing

- The Manager shall arrange audiometric testing for an employee if the employee is required to frequently use personal hearing protectors as a control measure for noise that exceeds the exposure standard
- Hearing is also to be monitored with audiometric testing in situations any of the following occur:
 - exposure to ototoxic substances occurs where airborne exposure is greater than 50% of the national exposure standard for the substance, regardless of noise level,
 - exposure to ototoxic substances occurs at any level, and noise exceeds the equivalent of 80dB(A) averaged over an 8-hour period or peak noise occurs at any time greater than 135 dB(C),
 - hand-arm vibration at any level and noise and noise exceeds the equivalent of 80dB(A) averaged over an 8-hour period or peak noise occurs at any time greater than 135 dB(C),
- Audiometric testing shall be provided within three months of the employee commencing the work, and at least every two years during employment More frequent testing may be needed if the 8-hour equivalent exposures exceed 100 dB(A).
- Employees are to be given the results of audiometric testing accompanied by a written explanation of the meaning and implications. Only with the consent of the employee should you provide their results to other parties.

Information, Training and Instruction

- Information, training and instruction shall be provided to employees and others who may be exposed to hazardous noise or other agents that may contribute to hearing loss.
- The training program should include but not limited to:
 - The tasks the workplace have with a potential to give rise to noise exposure
 - How to select, fit, wear, maintain and store personal hearing protectors.
 - The purpose and nature of audiometric testing
 - How to report defects in hearing protectors and noise control equipment.