

# Noise at Work Policy

## General Statement

Excessive noise levels can cause permanent damage to hearing, which can reduce an individual’s ability to hear normal conversation. This is known as Noise Induced Hearing Loss and can be caused by exposure to excessive noise levels over a period of many years. As a result, we have created a Noise at Work Policy to describe how we approach the issue of noise in the workplace.

## Definitions

Noise levels are measured in decibels (represented as dB). The most common form of measurement is dB(A) which represents average noise levels. However, the format dB(C) may occasionally be used to measure peak, impact or explosive noises which arise from machinery and equipment which produce short bursts of very loud noise, e.g. cartridge-operated tools.

## Legal Position

The law regarding noise has recently changed and is now covered by the Control of Noise at Work Regulations 2005 (CNWR). These were introduced in April 2006 and place new and more stringent duties on us to reduce noise levels in our factory/processing plant (amend as necessary). For example, whilst we are still required to take specific action once noise hits a certain number of decibels, these levels have been reduced. This means that the “lower exposure action value” is now 80dB and the “upper exposure action value” is 85dB. If noise emissions reach either of these levels, we are required by law to take specific action, depending on the level reached. It should be noted that the new maximum noise level allowed in our workplace will be 87 dB averaged over a day or a week, with a peak sound pressure limit of 140dB (this refers to the absolute maximum noise level allowed).

## Employers Duties

In addition to this noise reduction, the CNWR place a number of duties on us as the employer to do the following:

1	Assess the risks to our staff from noise in the workplace.
2	To take steps to reduce these noise levels by introducing a variety of control measures (at 85dB).
3	Where this isn’t possible, to provide our staff with hearing protection (at 80dB).
4	To provide employees with enough information, instruction and training to enable them to understand these new Regulations and their own duties (at 80dB).
5	To provide the necessary health surveillance where there is a risk that employees will be regularly exposed to noise levels above the upper exposure action value of 85dB, or are otherwise at risk, e.g. due to an existing hearing problem.

## Risk Assessment

As in common with all recent health and safety legislation, the CNWR require us to assess the risks to our staff from high noise levels. This will be done by identifying all noise hazards, e.g. machinery and equipment which produces noise levels of 80dB and above. We will then estimate the likely exposure to noise based over a typical week and identify the most suitable measures to eliminate, or most likely reduce the risks.



### Control Measures

After reviewing any working practices which involve high noise levels, we will try to eliminate this noise, where reasonably practicable. However, in most cases, this will not be possible. Therefore, we will look at ways of reducing both the noise level and noise exposure. This will include the following measures:

1	Assessing whether the parts of machinery or equipment which cause the noise may be replaced by those which are quieter.
2	Using our Machinery Purchasing Safety Checklist in order to help assess new or second-hand machinery for noise levels.
3	Introducing engineering controls which avoid metal-on-metal impacts e.g. line chutes with abrasion-resistant rubber.
4	Adding “dampeners” in order to reduce the noise from vibrating machine panels.
5	Alternatively, using anti-vibration mountings, or flexible couplings to isolate vibrating machinery or components.
6	Building enclosures around machines to reduce the amount of noise emitted into the workplace.
7	Keeping noisy machinery and processes away from quieter areas and those where staff spend most of their time.
8	Limiting the time that staff spend in noisy areas and ensuring that only authorized staff enter hearing protection zones.

### Hearing Protection

In some circumstances, it may not be possible to sufficiently reduce noise levels from machinery and equipment to below an average of 87dB. If this is the position, we will provide hearing protection to staff in order to reduce the noise level at the ear. Staff will be expected to wear this protection at all times when working, or passing through a designated hearing protection zone. Nick Harding is responsible for issuing the following hearing protection e.g. ear defenders and for making sure that replacements are readily available.

### Employee Duties

All employees are expected to fully cooperate with us with regard to any instructions and safe systems of work which we introduce in order to protect their hearing. As the provision of hearing protection, such as ear defenders is even more important in terms of assisting us in complying with the new maximum noise limit, all staff working in a designated hearing protection zone will be expected to wear the Personal Protective Equipment provided at all times. Any failure to do so without good cause could result in disciplinary proceedings being instigated.

### Instruction, Information and Training

Due to the risks to hearing that our staff may be exposed to, it is our policy that if noise levels exceed 80dB, we will inform staff of this exposure and any risk to hearing which it creates. We will also explain what control measures we have introduced and where staff can obtain hearing protection, in the event that noise levels cannot be sufficiently reduced by other means. Where the wearing of hearing protection is necessary, staff will be trained in its correct use, storage and how to look after it.

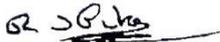


### Health Surveillance

It is our legal duty to provide hearing checks to any employee who is regularly exposed to noise levels of 85dB or above, or who is at greater risk of hearing damage, even at lower noise levels. Its purpose is to provide us with an early warning of any employee who may be suffering from the first stages of hearing damage and to take steps to ensure that no further damage occurs. If such health surveillance is necessary, it will be provided by the A1 Group Ltd.

### Revision

The Company will make all employees aware of this Company Policy.

Signed: 

Date: 1/1/24

Russell Pike - **Managing Director A1 Group**

**Next Review date 1<sup>st</sup> January 2025**