



Hearing Protection

The Control of Noise at Work Regulations 2005 (the Noise Regulations) came into force for all industry sectors in Great Britain on 6 April 2006 (except for the music and entertainment sectors where they came into force on 6 April 2008).

The aim of the Noise Regulations is to ensure that workers' hearing is protected from excessive noise at their place of work, which could cause them to lose their hearing and/or to suffer from tinnitus (permanent ringing in the ears).

Hearing us loud and clear?

Symptoms of hearing loss

Conversation becomes difficult or impossible

You have trouble using the telephone

You find it difficult to catch sounds like 't', 'd' and 's', so you confuse similar words.

Permanent tinnitus (ringing, whistling, buzzing or humming in the ears) can also be caused



Protecting your hearing at work - The step by step process

Co-operate with your employer

Wear any hearing protection you are given

Look after your hearing protection

Report any problems with your hearing protection

How we can help you stay compliant - easy as 1, 2, 3

1

Identify Noise Levels

Measuring the noise levels in the working environment is crucial to ensure the employees exposure levels are accurately identified. In support of this aim, we provide effective Noise Surveys to help you make an informed decision on what products you need.

2

Choose the right Protection

1 - Earplugs - Disposable/ Reusable/Detectable/Banded/ Custom Moulded
2 - Ear Defenders - Passive/Stereo/ Communication

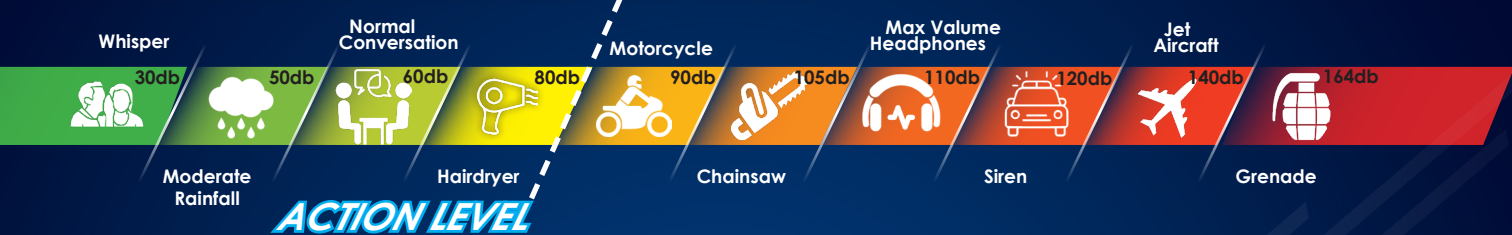
3

Validation with Fit Testing

Validation identifies if your employees are receiving the right protection from their current hearing devices . This will show you what personal attenuation rating your employees are currently working in and highlight if any further support or training is required.



Noise Decibel Reference Meter



What is an Action Level?

An Action Level is a noise exposure level at which employers are required to take certain steps to reduce the harmful effects of noise on hearing. There are two main action levels for continuous noise:

Lower Exposure Action Value This a daily or weekly average noise exposure level of 80 dB, at which the employer has to provide information and training and make hearing protection available.

Upper Exposure Action Value: This is set at a daily or weekly average noise exposure of 85 dB, above which, hearing protection is mandatory.

Exposure limit Action Value of 87 dB, above which no worker can be exposed (taking hearing protection into account).

European Standards:

- EN 352-1 - Ear defenders - Headband
- EN 352-2 - Earplugs
- EN 352-3 - Helmet-Mounted Ear Defenders
- EN 352-4 - Level-dependent ear muffs
- EN 352-5 - Active-Noise reduction ear muffs
- EN 352-6 - Ear Defenders with Electrical Audio Input
- EN352-2:2002 supersedes the previous EN352-2:1993

SNR (Single Number Rating)

In general, hearing protection should have a SNR (Single Number Rating) of around 25 to 30. SNR is the measure of protection that describes how many decibels of sound the hearing protection will stop. The aim is to find a suitable product that brings noise level down to between 70 and 80 decibels. Over-protection should be avoided as this may cause difficulties with communication and hearing warning signals leading to isolation where the risk of users removing the protection is increased.

Use the table below as an approximate guide to show you what protection levels are required for different noise levels.

Hearing Protection Selector

A-weighted noise level (dB)	Select protector with an SNR of..
85-90	SNR 20 or less
90-95	SNR 20-30
95-100	SNR 25-35
100-105	SNR 30 or More

Current Regulation

From April 2018 hearing protection was re-classified from category II to category III types of risk.

New products placed on the market from this date will face even further tests for conformity and certification.

Existing hearing protection can continue to be placed on the market under Cat II EC Cert until 2019. After this date ALL hearing protection will need to be certified to Cat III under the regulation.

Products already on the market (with distribution) can continue to be sold under either.

How To Fit Earplugs Correctly



For roll-down foam earplugs, start rolling the foam gently to avoid creases. Then roll firmly to make a small stiff cylinder. Move to step 2 quickly before the earplug expands too much.



Reach over the head to pull OUT (or for some people, pull UP or Back) on the outer ear to create a wider opening for the earplug to fit into.

Insert the earplug far enough so that it goes around the bend in the ear canal. This often feels sensitive (not painful), or may trigger a cough reflex. This is normal. Let go of the ear after the earplug is fully inserted.