

SAFE WORKING PROCEDURE

Noise at Work

CORPORATE HEALTH & SAFETY | VERSION 2.04 | November 2023

STATEMENT:

In order to comply with legislation and fulfil statutory responsibility, the council must make sure that:

- All work involving the use of noisy equipment must have a risk assessment covering each individual piece of equipment.
- All noisy equipment must be correctly maintained and serviced.
- Employees must be trained in the correct use and of the equipment.
- Employees are provided with the appropriate hearing protection where the reduction in noise levels cannot be reduced by other methods.
- Employees must have health surveillance if there is a risk to health.

SCOPE:

This Safe Working Procedure applies to:

- All managers including Head Teachers referred to as managers herein.
- All employees of Southampton City Council

1. Responsibilities

Service Lead/Head Teachers are responsible for ensuring:

- 1.1. Task based and equipment specific risk assessments have been undertaken and appropriate controls in place to manage hazards at source in line with the hierarchy of risk controls (see [SWP Risk Assessment](#)).

Managers/Supervisors are responsible for ensuring compliance with the SWP and must:

- 1.2. Ensure all work involving the use of noisy equipment and workplaces has a risk assessment covering each individual piece of equipment as per [SWP Risk Assessment](#).
- 1.3. Make sure the legal limits on noise exposure are not exceeded (Please refer to table below).
- 1.4. Adopt a low-noise purchasing policy when replacing equipment.
- 1.5. Ensure all noisy equipment is correctly maintained and serviced as per manufacturer's instructions.
- 1.6. Consult with their employees regarding which processes, if any, involve regular exposure to noise.
- 1.7. Ensure their employees are trained in the correct use of the equipment.
- 1.8. Ensure their employees are provided with the appropriate hearing protection, and are trained to wear and maintain it if you cannot reduce the noise exposure enough by using other methods.
- 1.9. Ask your employees if they have any hearing loss symptoms and whether the equipment being used produces high levels of noise.
- 1.10. Ensure employees have health surveillance where there is a risk to their health.
- 1.11. Ensure the workplace and/or equipment has the correct safety signage.

Employees must:

- 1.12. Ensure they follow the controls identified by the risk assessment covering each piece of equipment and workplace.
- 1.13. Inform their supervisor which, if any, processes involves regular exposure to noise;
- 1.14. Follow any training to ensure the correct use of the equipment.
- 1.15. Wear any hearing protection provided, follow any training provided and ensure they correctly use the hearing protection
- 1.16. Inform their supervisor if they have any hearing loss symptoms, and whether the equipment being used produces high levels of noise.
- 1.17. Attend any health surveillance that is arranged where there is risk to their health.

2. Procedures

- 2.1 The Health and Safety Executive have provided free downloadable guidance to the regulations (link below).
- 2.2 There is also separate HSE guidance on noise at work (links below). Managers should use these guides and other information detailed below to help inform the risk assessment process and the management of noisy equipment and noise in the workplace.
- 2.3 Health Surveillance may be required by employees exposed to noise at work.
- 2.4 The authority's policy on health surveillance for its employees is contained in [SWP Health Surveillance](#).

3. Safe Working Procedures Relevant to This Document

- 3.1. Risk Assessment

- 3.2. Accident/Incident Reporting and Investigation
- 3.3. Health Surveillance
- 3.4. Safety Representatives
- 3.5. Work Equipment
- 3.6. Personal Protective Equipment
- 3.7. Control of Vibration at Work

Relevant forms

- 3.8.1. [Employee Daily HAV/Noise Exposure Sheet](#)

Note: Other safe working procedures may apply, the assessor should consult the SWPs. An A-Z is available on the Council's [Health and Safety Intranet](#).

4. Main Legislation Relevant to This Document

- 4.1. [Health and Safety at Work etc Act 1974](#)
- 4.2. [The Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations](#)
- 4.3. [Control of Noise at Work](#)
- 4.4. [The Provision and Use of Work Equipment Regulations](#)
- 4.5. [The Supply of Machinery \(Safety\) Regulations](#)
- 4.6. [The Personal Protective Equipment at Work Regulations](#)
- 4.7. [The Health and Safety \(Safety Signs and Signals\) Regulations](#)

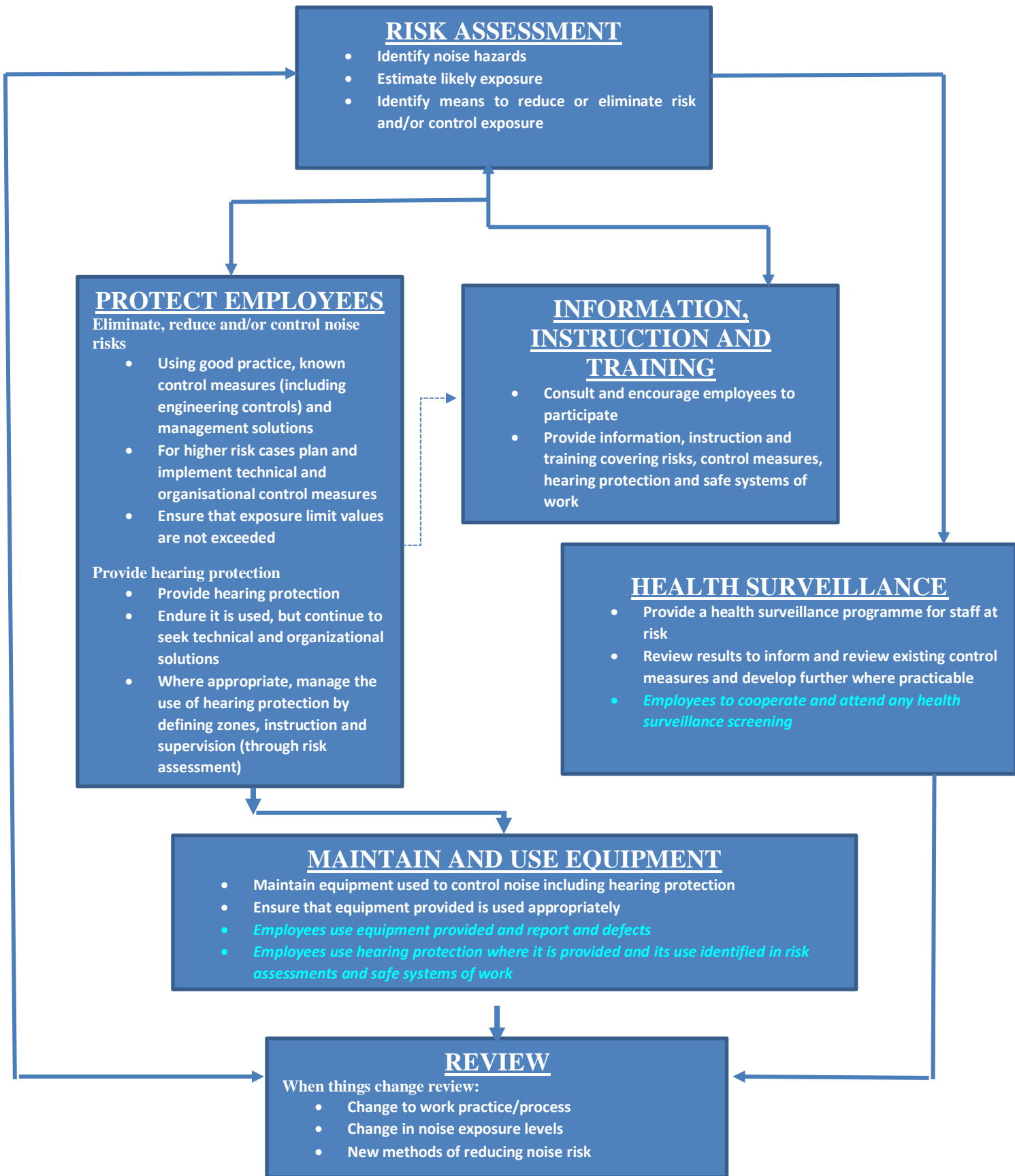
5. Contact Address's and Guidance Links

- 5.1 Health and Safety Executive
 - [HSE](#)
 - 5.1.1. [Managing Risks and Risk Assessment at Work](#)
 - 5.1.2. [Noise microsite](#)
 - 5.1.3. L108 – [Controlling noise at work. Guidance on the Control of Noise at Work Regulations 2005](#)
 - 5.1.4. HSG260 – [Sound Advice: control of noise at work in music and entertainment](#)
 - 5.1.5. INDG362 (rev 2) – [Noise at work](#)
 - 5.1.6. INDG363 – [Protect your hearing or lose it!](#)
 - 5.1.7. [Noise frequently asked questions](#)
 - 5.1.8. [Noise exposure calculators and ready-reckoners](#)
- 5.1. Royal Society for the Prevention of Accidents
 - [RoSPa](#)
- 5.2. Institute of Occupational Safety and Health
 - [IOSH](#)
- 5.3. Corporate Health and Safety Service
 - [Health and Safety Intranet](#)

For full contact address visit the health and safety intranet [Useful Contacts](#).

MANAGEMENT OF NOISE RISK

- Employer Action
- *Employee Action*



NOISE ACTION LEVELS

There are three noise action levels defined in the Control of Noise at Work Regulations. At each level the employer is required to take certain steps to reduce the harmful effects of noise on hearing.

Noise Action Levels	Daily/weekly average	Peak sound pressure	Employers Duties
Lower exposure action value	80 dB(A)	135 dB(C)	Provide information and training. Make hearing protection available.
Upper exposure action value	85 dB(A)	137 dB(C)	Take reasonably practicable measures to reduce noise exposure e.g. engineering controls/technical measures. Provide mandatory hearing protection pending engineering controls and, where necessary, after engineering controls
Exposure limit value	87 dB(A)	140 dB(C)	Ensure level is not exceeded, taking hearing protection into account.

HEARING PROTECTION - CHOOSING

Hearing protection such as earmuffs and earplugs is your last line of defence against damage. There are many different types and designs available; always ensure the protection is sufficient for the level of noise and is compatible with other PPE worn.

Earmuffs: These should totally cover your ears, fit tightly and have no gaps around the seals. Don't let hair, jewellery, glasses, hats etc. interfere with the seal. Keep the seals and the insides clean. Don't stretch the headband – the tension is crucial to protection. Helmet-mounted earmuffs can need particular care to get a good seal around your ears.

Earplugs: These go right in the ear canal, not just across it. Practise fitting them and get help if you are having trouble. Clean your hands before you fit earplugs, and don't share them. Some types you use only once, others can be re-used and even washed – make sure you know which type you have.

Semi-inserts/canal caps: These are held in or across the ear canal by a band, usually plastic. Check for a good seal, every time you put them on. Follow the same general advice as for earplugs and make sure any band keeps its tension.