

Your Safety Matters

This information letter is distributed to those people who are ensuring that their workplace is safe and healthy. This includes members of OHS Committees, OHS Representatives, Safety Officers, Supervisors, Managers and Directors. "Your Safety Matters" (formerly "Committee Member") is free information letter which has been distributed since 1996.

Noisy Workplaces



Unsafe levels of noise can occur in many workplaces sometimes even in offices or schools.

For example a study made by the University of Western Sydney in 2007 in 14 preschools found that;

- > **36% of staff** were exposed to peak noise levels **exceeding the maximum permissible level.**
- > **40% of staff** were exposed to average noise levels in an **8 hour day** that equaled the **maximum average permitted level.**

Only a measured noise assessment will give a definite answer to whether noise exposure exceeds safe legal limits in your workplace. A rough guide is that having to raise your voice to carry on a conversation with a person one metre away is an indicator that a noise assessment is necessary.



The risk of suffering permanent hearing damage is dependent upon the loudness of the noise and the length of time that you are exposed to it. For example 8 hours exposure to heavy traffic noise could be damaging but only 2 minutes of jack-hammer noise could be damaging.



Noise is covered in clause 49 of the OHS Regulation 2001 and in the Noise Code of Practice and WorkCover has 4 useful publications about it.

Sometimes noise is simply an irritant or distraction and for the sake of everyone's peace of mind and productivity it is good policy to handle it. But only a measured noise assessment will definitely tell you whether noise exceeds safe legal limits.



This publication provides general information about ohs. It is not a legal opinion and does not represent a comprehensive statement of the law to be applied to a particular problem.