

GAP Tool Box Talk: Noise



Purpose

The purpose of this tool box talk is to provide you with:

- Information on the Noise at Work Regulations
- Information on the hazards
- Controls and precautions which should be taken to protect from noise



Regulations

- The regulations for noise have set 3 levels at which employers must take action to protect their staff
- Employers must complete risk assessments, carried out by a competent person where the first action level is exceeded
 - *First Action Level: 80db(A) daily personal exposure*
 - *Second Action Level: 85db(A) daily personal exposure*
 - *Peak Action Level: 140 pascals maximum sound pressure*
- Noise reduction measures should be implemented by a competent person, should the noise level exceed the first action level
- Workers are provided with appropriate training and information
- Appropriate PPE is provided for the work force where evidence of a risk to noise is found

Hazards

There are various types of equipment can produce noise levels which may be harmful to hearing e.g:

- Circular saws
- Generators
- Breakers
- Excavators
- Compressors

This list is not exhaustive



Please note

You may not be the one using the equipment yourself but you can still be affected

- Ensure you look out for any NOISE hazard signs on site
- Make sure that you follow any ear protection zone instructions

Remember:

- It is not only on site that you have to remember to protect your hearing. Consider also nightclubs, loud music via headphones and music systems, etc.

Controlling noise

- Use less noisy processes if possible
- If shouting in order to be heard over the noise level will require ear defenders to be worn
- Keep covers on equipment when in use if they are designed with them in place for protection
- Ensure any mufflers are correctly fitted on breakers
- Don't keep machinery running unnecessarily
- Ensure you do not expose your fellow workers to your noise
- Move the noise source away from the work area or move the work area away from the noise
- It may be possible to shield noisy processes i.e. behind a wall or by using sound absorbing material

Ear protection

- Never use cotton wool for ear protection - it is not effective
- Always ensure that ear plugs are a good fit and are correctly inserted
- When using disposable ear plugs ensure they are discarded after use
- Clean your hands before touching all types of ear plugs
- Ear defenders should fit the head all round the seal
- Ensure that ear defenders are worn the correct way round
- Ensure that the seals are always in a serviceable condition
- Do not alter pressure of ear defenders by bending headband
- Should you encounter any issue with wearing ear defenders, report this to your manager