

GWENT POLICE CONTROL OF NOISE PROCEDURE



1.1 Introduction

Noisy working environments have the potential to cause harm and must be fully risk assessed. Noise levels that regularly exceed 80dB(A) will require specific action to be taken. Where practicable, design or engineering controls must be implemented to minimise noise levels, in preference to the use of personal protective equipment (PPE).

This procedure has been introduced to protect all police personnel whilst at work, and others who may be affected by work activities, against noise levels which could cause damage to their hearing.

Gwent Police will ensure that the required standards are met to protect staff who may be at risk from the effects of excessive or prolonged noise levels.

Managers and staff must ensure that the appropriate precautions are observed to protect themselves and others from the effects of noise.

Guidance on noise levels and general procedures are set out in this document.

PRINTED VERSIONS SHOULD NOT BE RELIED UPON. THE MOST UP TO DATE VERSION CAN BE FOUND ON THE INTRANET POLICIES SITE

1.2 Procedure

1 Introduction

- 1.1 Noise at work is recognised as a potential health hazard. Evidence shows that excessive noise can cause long term damage to hearing and accelerate the normal loss of hearing which occurs as people grow older. Persons exposed to excessive noise (i.e. above 80 dB(A)) for long periods could be affected.
- 1.2 How do you identify if you have a noise problem at work? Generally if officers/staff have to raise their voices to carry out a normal conversation when about 2 metres apart for at least part of their working day.
- 1.3 The objective of this procedure is to protect all officers and staff whilst at work against noise which is likely to cause damage to their hearing.

2 General

- 2.1 Gwent Police will reduce the risk of damage to the hearing of its officers and staff from exposure to noise to the lowest level where reasonably practicable.
- 2.2 Where the level of noise is likely to exceed 80 dB(A) Gwent Police requires that:
- 2.2.1 an initial noise measurement is carried out by a competent person and/or the Health and Safety Adviser.
 - 2.2.2 if the initial measurement and exposure time indicates the potential for harm, suitable control measures will need to be put in place immediately and if necessary a detailed noise assessment will be arranged. Advice on suitable external specialists will be provided by the Health and Safety Department.
 - 2.2.3 records of the assessments are made and kept with Service Areas / Health and Safety Department;
 - 2.2.4 exposure to noise is reduced so far as is reasonably practicable by means other than ear protectors, i.e. by engineering controls;
 - 2.2.5 adequate information, instruction and training about the risks to hearing is given to its employees;
 - 2.2.6 ear protection zones are marked with notices;

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- 2.2.7 audiometric assessments are undertaken by those employees considered at risk from noise at work;
 - 2.2.8 all equipment is maintained;
 - 2.2.9 safety committees are consulted on noise reduction programmes and they are provided with records of assessments;
 - 2.2.10 disciplinary action be taken for employees at risk not wearing their hearing protection.
- 2.3 Gwent Police requires suppliers of plant, machinery and equipment to provide adequate information on the noise likely to result from its use. Please see [Appendix A](#) (Low Noise Hire and Purchasing Guidance Document). This requirement will also apply to contractors using equipment or machinery in respect of any work commissioned by Gwent Police.

3 Responsibilities

3.1 Service Area / Departmental Managers will:

- 3.1.1 ensure that this Procedure is implemented within their areas / departments and appropriately monitored;
- 3.1.2 ensure suitable training for managers and other staff involved in the implementation of this procedure takes place if required.
- 3.1.3 ensure that all areas within their responsibility where noise is likely to be a nuisance or exceed 80 dB(A) are identified through the process of risk assessment;
- 3.1.4 ensure that, in respect of areas identified in 3.1.3 above, noise assessments are carried out in accordance with 2.2.1 and 2.2.2 above and that noise is reduced to the lowest level reasonably practicable or is controlled at source by design or engineering means;
- 3.1.5 in conjunction with the Health and Safety Department ensure that where noise levels exceed 80 db(A) the reasons are identified and that steps are taken to reduce the noise at source and or reduce the time officer and staff have to spend in the noisy area;

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- 3.1.6 ensure that where it is necessary for hearing defenders to be worn that officers and staff wear them appropriately and disciplinary action to be taken where officers and staff do not wear the equipment;
- 3.1.7 ensure that there is noise information supplied with all hired or new equipment;
- 3.1.8 ensure that the ear defenders provided are suitable for the type of noise exposure.
- 3.2 The Gwent Police Occupational Health Department will ensure that audiometric assessments are undertaken for officers and staff considered at risk from noise at work;

4 Officers and Staff

- 4.1 Officers and staff have their part to play in reducing risk to hearing. They must:
 - 4.1.1 use the engineering controls provided;
 - 4.1.2 wear hearing protection, if provided;
 - 4.1.3 keep the hearing protection in a good condition and replace it as and when necessary;
 - 4.1.4 report any defects immediately;
 - 4.1.5 undergo audiometric testing when it has been considered there is a risk from noise at work.
- 4.2 Officers and staff will be provided with:
 - 4.2.1 information, advice and training to ensure they understand the risks of hearing damage and the measures necessary to avoid it;
 - 4.2.2 the results of any assessments undertaken.

For advice on the use of Airwave Handsets please refer to the [Airwave Support Office website](#).

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5 Noise Advice and Monitoring

5.1 The Force Health and Safety Adviser will provide:

- 5.1.1 advice on noise assessments;
 - 5.1.2 monitor the implementation and effectiveness of this procedure;
 - 5.1.3 advise on the selection care, use and maintenance of hearing protection;
 - 5.1.4 where necessary arrange training for managers and supervisors in the requirements of the noise procedure.
- 5.2 The Occupational Health Department will arrange audiometric assessments for officers and staff whose hearing is considered at risk from noise at work. They will also provide advice and guidance based on noise assessments, specific risk assessments and risk based medical assessments regarding noise.
- 5.3 Advice on areas of identified risk to staff at work within Gwent Police where assessments have been undertaken:

2.0 The Legal Basis and Legitimate Aims

The Control of Noise Regulations 2005

3.0 Human Rights Certification of Compliance

The procedure has been checked for compliance with the Human Rights Act; with particular reference to the legal basis of its precepts: the legitimacy of its aims; the justification and proportionality of the actions intended by it; that it is the least intrusive and damaging option necessary to achieve the aims; and that it defines the need to document the relevant decision making process's and outcomes of actions.

4.0 Compliance with The Welsh Language Scheme

This procedure aims to comply with the organisations Welsh language Scheme in terms of dealing with the Welsh speaking public, impact upon the public image of the organisation and the implementation of the language scheme.

5.0 Risk Assessment and health and safety Considerations

The Gwent Police Service Dynamic Assessment should be applied as necessary. A training package in the use of risk assessment will be provided to all police personnel if requested or required.

6.0 Procedure Identification Section

Procedure Title: CONTROL OF NOISE

Reference: 517/13 b issue 1

ACPO Lead: DCC

Service Area Owner: People Services

Department Responsible: Health and Safety

Links to other Policies/Procedure: Health and Safety Policy

Procedure Implementation Date: 20th Oct 2011

Procedure Review Date: Oct 2013

GWENT POLICE

**LOW NOISE
HIRE AND PURCHASING GUIDANCE**

The purpose of this guidance is to introduce a positive and cost effective approach to the control and reduction of workplace and nuisance noise issues.

By choosing to purchase or hire quieter plant, equipment and machinery, significant savings can be made on subsequent noise reduction measures once the equipment has been installed or is in use. This guidance requires all those with responsibility for the purchase, hire or specification of suitable plant, equipment or machinery to:

- Consider the effects that new or replacement plant, machinery or other equipment may have on the generation of both workplace and nuisance noise.
- Ensure that noise levels as low as realistically possible are specified to suppliers within appropriate tender documents, and that suppliers are made aware of their legal obligations.
- Discuss with suppliers what the requirements for the equipment are and what the likely noise levels will be when used for its intended purpose.
- Compare and contrast the manufacturer's specified noise levels for equipment from different suppliers.
- Purchase/hire equipment from suppliers who can demonstrate a low noise design with noise control measures featured as standard and not as a costly optional extra.
- Maintain an audit trail of the decisions taken when selecting equipment to help demonstrate that the company has complied with its statutory obligations with regards to reducing workplace and nuisance noise.
- Discuss with suppliers maintenance arrangements to ensure that the equipment continues operating efficiently and does not get louder over time.

Furthermore under the **Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974** and the **Supply of Machinery (Safety) Regulations 1992** (as amended), suppliers of machinery must:

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- Design and construct machinery so that the noise produced is as low as possible.
- Provide information about the noise the machine or equipment produces under actual working conditions.

Through implementing this policy, the risks associated with the generation of nuisance noise will be greatly minimised.

SUPPORTING INFORMATION ON THE CONTROL OF NOISE AT WORK PROCEDURE

In general terms a person's exposure to noise is determined by the noise "dose" they experience, which is a function of the amount or level of noise and the duration of their exposure.

This is defined in the Regulations as the "daily noise exposure level" which takes into account the average levels of noise at work normalised over an 8-hour day. The units of measurement are:

- "dB" is the actual amount or level of noise in decibels.
- "A" signifies that the noise as measured replicates the frequencies recognised by the human ear.
- "LEP,d" signifies the duration of noise exposure averaged over an eight hour working day.
- "LEP,w" signifies the duration of noise exposure averaged over a nominal week of five working days

The lower and upper exposure action levels detailed below take no account of any attenuation (or reduction) in noise levels provided by hearing protection, but the use of personal hearing protection is taken into account where exposure limit values are concerned.

The Control of Noise at Work Regulations 2005 specifies certain exposure levels which trigger particular action, i.e.:

- A Lower Exposure Action Level of **80** dB(A)LEP,d
- An Upper Exposure Action Level of **85** dB(A)LEP,d
- An Exposure Limit Value of **87** dB(A)LEP,d

Where noise levels are at, or exceed, the Lower Exposure Action Level:

- a noise risk assessment must be carried out;
- information and training must be provided for employees;
- hearing protection must be made available.

Where noise levels exceed the Upper Exposure Action Level, the following additional requirements are necessary:

- a programme of risk control measures must be carried out.
- health surveillance is recommended

Where noise levels are at, or exceed, the Exposure Limit Value:

- steps must be taken to ensure employees are not exposed to such noise levels by:
 - reducing exposure to below the exposure limit value
 - identify the reason for the exposure limit value being exceeded
 - modify the organisational and technical measures in place to prevent the Exposure Limit Value being exceeded again

Further information and guidance can be found by visiting the Health and Safety Executive's website:

<http://www.hse.gov.uk/noise/>