

Health and Safety Bulletin: NOISE



Sound Advice, the practical guidance on the Control of Noise at Work for the music and entertainment industry has been available for a year now.

<http://www.hse.gov.uk/noise/musicound.htm?ebul=noise/aug09&cr=2>

Key messages

- There is evidence that exposure to live music can cause hearing damage
- Noise Regulations require each employer to manage the risk to their employees and, where possible, freelancers
- Control, reduce and monitor exposure to noise
- Many of the controls are simple and cost-effective
- The audience can still enjoy the performance with the controls in place



Hearing loss caused by work is preventable. Read about this and other key facts about noise at work visit:

<http://www.hse.gov.uk/noise/keyfacts.htm?ebul=noise/aug09&cr=4>

<http://www.opsi.gov.uk/si/si2005/20051643.htm>

- Hearing loss caused by work is preventable but once your hearing has gone it won't come back.
- Damage can cause loss of hearing ability and people may also suffer a permanent sensation of ringing in the ears, known as tinnitus (tell me about it!).
- Hearing loss caused by exposure to noise at work continues to be a significant occupational disease. Some 170,000 people in the UK suffer deafness, tinnitus or other ear conditions as a result of exposure to excessive noise at work.
- There are many practical, cost-effective ways of protecting all members of staff

- Full compliance with the new Control of Noise at Work Regulations 2005 would eventually eliminate occupational noise-induced hearing loss. HSE aims that by 2030 there should be no new cases of noise-induced hearing loss through noise at work.
- Factors that contribute to hearing damage are noise levels and how people are exposed to the noise, daily or over a number of years.
- The most efficient and effective way of controlling noise is by technical and organisational means that protect workers at source, e.g. changes in process, reducing vibration (damping) and reducing time spent in noisy areas.
- Health surveillance or hearing checks are vital to detect and respond to early signs of damage.

Myth: Health and safety laws mean concert-goers have to wear earplugs

The reality:

No, audiences don't have to wear earplugs! Going to noisy concerts is their choice. The laws are there to protect people who have to work in loud places.

Concert staff are at more risk of suffering hearing damage because they regularly work in high levels of noise. That is why employers should make sure they provide protection – this could be as simple as moving staff away from the noisiest areas, or providing suitable earplugs.



Hearing loss is preventable, so it's important to protect people to help them enjoy long and successful careers. The laws are there to control real risks to workers – not to take the fun out of concerts.

<http://www.hse.gov.uk/myth/aug09.pdf>

Other Information

For a list of free guidance on noise issues click on the links below for noise specific information leaflets. Most are free and downloadable.

- <http://www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/noisindx.htm?ebul=noise/aug09&cr=5>
- <http://www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/indg362.pdf>

