

Monash University Procedure

Procedure Title	Noise Management Procedure
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Procedure Owner	Manager, OH&S
Category	Operational
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Scope	The Noise Management processes outlined in this document are provided at the Australian campuses of Monash University.
Purpose	This procedure provides information on managing health and safety risks associated with noise exposure in the workplace and to achieve compliance with the Occupational Health and Safety Act 2004 (Vic) and Occupational Health and Safety Regulations 2017 (Vic).

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1. Abbreviations

OH&S	Monash Occupational Health & Safety
OHS	Occupational Health and Safety

2. Definitions

A general list of definitions is provided in the [Definitions tool](#). Definitions specific to this procedure are provided below:

Audiometric Test: A hearing test. The measurement of a person's air conduction hearing threshold levels using an electro-acoustic instrument (audiometer) equipped with earphones that provide pure tones of specific discrete frequencies at known hearing levels.

Hearing Protector: A device that is inserted or covers the ear and is designed for the purpose of protecting the person's hearing.

dB: decibel, a logarithmic unit of measurement for the loudness of sound.

dB(A): "A" weighted decibel, which approximates how the human ear responds to noise at moderate levels.

dB(C): "C"-weighting filter, which influences only the highest and lowest frequencies and measures peak noise levels.

Noise Exposure Standard: The noise levels set by the OHS regulations as the 8 hour equivalent continuous sound pressure of 85 decibels (A) measured in A-weighted-decibels referenced to 20 micropascals at the employee's ear position, or C-weighted peak hold sound pressure level reading of 140 decibels(C) measured in decibels referenced to 20 micropascals at person's ear position.

Nuisance Noise: Nuisance noise is noise that does not cause hearing loss, but may have a psychological effect and impact on performance.

3. Noise Exposure

Most people's ears are sensitive to noise and whilst not all noise results in hearing loss, it may still have a psychological effect and impact on performance. Nuisance noise can be difficult to control, but should be managed at a local level as far as is reasonably practicable.

Noise can affect the small nerve cells in the ear that convert messages to the brain. Exposure to very loud noises or loud noise over a period of time can cause the nerve cells in the inner ear to die causing noise induced hearing loss. Once damage to hearing occurs it cannot be repaired.

Under the Occupational Health and Safety Regulations 2017 (Vic), Monash University must ensure that its employees are not exposed to noise greater than the noise exposure standard, which is an average of 85 dB(A) for 8 hours, or to any instantaneous noise in excess of 140 dB(C).

The dB(A) sound level measurement has become universally accepted in the assessment of the overall noise hazard since this level provides a rating of industrial broadband frequencies that reflects their association with noise induced hearing loss.

For example, the noise exposure standard is exceeded after 4 hours at 88 dB(A) or 15 minutes at 100 dB(A).

4. Risk Management

In accordance with the OHS Regulations 2017 (Vic), if the noise is hazardous noise (above 85dB(A), the risk must be controlled in a systematic way and must start with controlling the noise at the source as a first step.

A risk assessment must be completed in [SARAH](#) in accordance with the [Risk Management Procedure](#) and appropriate controls implemented. These include but are not limited to:

- Controlling the noise at the source through a process of elimination or engineering measures;
- Purchasing quieter equipment and ensuring that equipment is well-serviced;
- Administrative controls such as limiting the duration of exposure through task rotation; and
- Personal protective equipment, if all other controls do not reduce the noise levels to an acceptable level.

5. OHS Noise Survey/Assessment

A noise assessment must be conducted when there is uncertainty about whether or not employees are being exposed to excessive occupational noise. A noise assessment involves measuring noise levels generated by machinery and processes, as well as the levels received by the worker's ears. Additionally, noise assessments can provide valuable information for controlling noise.

To arrange a noise assessment, contact [Monash Occupational Health & Safety \(OH&S\)](#).

6. Reporting

All hazards and injuries relating to noise exposure must be reported immediately via [SARAH](#) in accordance with the [Hazard and Incident Reporting, Investigation and Recording Procedure](#).

7. Audiometric Testing

An audiometric test must be performed on employees who require hearing protection to control their exposure to noise above the exposure standard. Audiometric Testing for these staff members must be provided within 3 months of the employee starting work, and at least every two years thereafter. Testing after 2 years is considered in breach of the legislation.

The Occupational Health Team will coordinate the Audiometric Testing in accordance with AS/NZS 1269.4. A copy of the test results will be provided to the staff member soon after the results are received by the Occupational Health Team. Staff members who require further follow up will be assessed by the Occupational Physician and further referral provided as necessary.

8. Responsibility for Implementation

A comprehensive list of OHS responsibilities is provided in the document [OHS Roles, Committees and Responsibilities Procedure](#). A summary of the specific responsibilities relevant to Noise Management is provided below.

Occupational Health Team, OH&S

The responsibilities of the Occupational Health team, OH&S include:

- Maintaining records of Audiometric Testing according to the [OHS Records Management procedure](#); and
- Liaising with OHS Consultants/Advisors and area management regarding corrective actions and controls to address and to prevent recurrences of adverse monitoring results.

Heads of Academic/Administrative Units

It is the responsibility of heads of academic/administrative units to:

- Ensure that procedures are in place in their area to reduce the risks associated with noise;
- Ensure that staff who require Audiometric testing are identified; and
- All costs are payable by the department.

Supervisors

It is the responsibility of supervisors to ensure that:

- Hazards and risks associated with noise are controlled;
- Staff/students are provided with appropriate hearing protectors if required;
- There is appropriate signage and labelling of plant in areas that require hearing protection;
- Staff who require Audiometric testing are identified including baseline and exit medicals as required;
- Necessary information, instruction and training or supervision is provided to staff and students to enable them to perform their role safely regarding Occupational Noise.

Staff & Students

It is the responsibility of staff and students to:

- Follow the direction of the University in relation to Noise Management requirements, such as attending training, using PPE provided; and
- Participate in the OHS risk management process including reporting of hazards that they identify in their workplace.

9. Records

For OHS Records document retention please refer to:

[Monash University OHS Records Management Procedure](#)

Status	New
Approval Body	Monash University OHS Committee
Legislation Mandating Compliance	Occupational Health and Safety Act 2004 (Vic) Occupational Health and Safety Regulations 2017 (Vic) Occupational Health and Safety (Noise) Regulations 2004 (Vic)
Related Policies	OHS Policy
Related Documents	<p>Australian and International Standards AS/NZS 4801:2001 Occupational Health & Safety Management Systems – specifications with guidance for use. AS/NZS 1269.4 Occupational Noise Management. OHSAS 18001:2007 Occupational Health & Safety Management Systems – requirements</p> <p>WorkSafe Victoria Documents WorkSafe Noise Compliance Code - Edition 1 March 2018</p> <p>Monash University OHS Documents OHS Records Management Procedure</p>

10. Document History

Version	Date of Issue	Changes made to document
1.0	November 2019	Noise Management Procedure, v.1
1.1	January 2020	Minor updates to incorporate definitions and additional guidance on risk management from Occupational Noise Exposure and Control Information Sheet