NOISE MANAGEMENT PROCEDURE

SCOPE

This Procedure relates to all activities under the management and control of Monash University in Australia and applies to affected workers; including staff, students, contractors and visitors.

PROCEDURE STATEMENT

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).

1. Abbreviations

DWG	Designated Work Group
HSR	Health & Safety Representative
OH&S	Monash Occupational Health & Safety team, led by the Health, Safety and Wellbeing Manager
OHS	Occupational Health and Safety
SARAH/SARAH	Safety and Risk Analysis Hub

2. Noise Exposure

2.1 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.

2.2 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.

2.3 Under the Occupational Health and Safety Regulations 2017 (Vic), Monash University must ensure that its staff and students 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).

2.4 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.

2.5 The occupational limit may be reached if working for a shorter period at a higher sound pressure level, for example, 4 hours at 88 dB(A).

3. Risk Management

3.1 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, using the Hierarchy of Controls, and must start with controlling the noise at the source as a first step.

3.2 A risk assessment must be completed in SARAH in accordance with the OHS 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.

4. OHS Noise Assessment

4.1 A noise assessment involves measuring noise levels generated by machinery and processes, as well as levels received by the worker's ears. Additionally, noise assessments can provide valuable information for controlling noise.

4.2 A noise assessment must be conducted:

- When there is uncertainty about whether or not workers may be exposed to noise that exceeds the exposure standard;
- In circumstances that indicate the results of previous assessments are no longer applicable; and
- At any time when reasonably requested by a Safety Officer or a Health & Safety Representative (HSR) of the Designated Work Group (DWG).

4.3 A noise assessment must include a determination of the:

- Level of noise to which a person is exposed without hearing protection; and
- Duration of the exposure.

4.4 To arrange a noise assessment, contact Monash Occupational Health & Safety (OH&S).

5. Reporting

5.1 All hazards and injuries relating to noise exposure must be reported immediately via SARAH in accordance with the Managing OHS Hazards and Incidents Procedure.

6. Audiometric Testing

6.1 An audiometric test must be performed on a person who requires hearing protection to control their exposure to noise above the exposure standard. Audiometric Testing must be provided within 3 months of the commencement of work in areas where hearing protection is required, and at least every two years thereafter. Testing after 2 years is considered in breach of the legislation.

6.2 Audiometric testing should also be completed when a person ceases work in areas where hearing protection is required or when they complete their work or study with Monash University. Testing may also be reasonably requested by a HSR representing the person's DWG.

6.3 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 person soon after the results are received by the Occupational Health Team. Persons who require further follow up will be assessed by the Monash University Occupational Physician or their delegate, and further referral provided as necessary.

6.4 Where a person requires further follow up, any relevant activity risk assessments and associated controls will also be reviewed as per the OHS Risk Management Procedure.

7. Responsibility for Implementation

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

7.1.1 **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 prevent recurrences of adverse monitoring results.

7.1.2 **OH&S:** The responsibilities of the OH&S team include:

- Ensuring Noise Assessments are conducted in accordance with Section 4 of this procedure.

7.1.3 **Heads of Units:** It is the responsibility of the Heads of Units to:

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

7.1.4 **Performance Managers/Supervisors:** It is the responsibility of Performance Managers/Supervisors to ensure that:

- Hazards and risks associated with noise are controlled;
- Persons are provided with appropriate hearing protection;
- There is appropriate signage and labelling of plant in areas that require hearing protection;
- Persons who require audiometric testing are identified to the Occupational Health Team for baseline, routine and exit tests; and
- Necessary information, instruction and training or supervision is provided.

7.1.5 **Workers:** It is the responsibility of workers; including staff, students, contractors and visitors to:

- Follow the direction of the University in relation to Noise Management requirements, such as attending training, booking and attending baseline, routine and exit audiometric testing and/or audiological exams (as required), using PPE provided; and
- Participate in the OHS risk management process including reporting of hazards in their workplace.

8. Records

8.1 For OHS Records document retention please refer to:

OHS Records Management Procedure

DEFINITIONS

A general list of definitions is provided in the Definitions tool. Definitions specific to this procedure are provided below:

Key word	Definition
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 Protection	The outcome achieved when a device 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 micro pascals at the person's ear position, or C-weighted peak hold sound pressure level reading of 140 decibels(C) measured in

	decibels referenced to 20 micro pascals 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.

GOVERNANCE

Parent policy	OHS&W Policy
Supporting procedures	**Monash OHS Documents** Managing OHS Hazards and Incidents Procedure OHS Records Management Procedure OHS Risk Management Procedure OHS Roles, Responsibilities and Committees Procedure
Supporting schedules	N/A
Associated procedures	**Australian and International Standards** AS/NZS 1269.4 Occupational Noise Management. ISO 45001:2018 Occupational Health and Safety Management Systems **WorkSafe Victoria Documents** WorkSafe Noise Compliance Code - Edition 2 December 2019
Related legislation	Occupational Health and Safety Act 2004 (Vic) Occupational Health and Safety Regulations 2017 (Vic) Occupational Health and Safety (Noise) Regulations 2004 (Vic)
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Procedure owner	Health, Safety and Wellbeing Manager
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Content enquiries	ohshelpline@monash.edu

DOCUMENT HISTORY

Version	Date Approved	Changes made to document
1.0	December 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'
1.2	July 2021	1. Updated certification logo in footer to ISO 45001 2. Updated the Standard to ISO 45001 under "Associated procedures" in the Governance table 3. Updated OHS Policy under 'Parent Policy' to OHS&W Policy
2.0	December 2022	1. Updated Noise Compliance Code in Governance table.

		2. Changed the term 'staff' to 'worker', where appropriate. 3. Renamed Section 4 to 'Noise Assessment' and added the criteria for when this must be conducted and what must be determined as part of this. 4. Added requirement for an exit test and the responsibilities for Performance Supervisors and Workers (6.2). 5. Added statement to clarify that where a person requires further follow up, any relevant activity risk assessments and associated controls also need to be reviewed (6.2)
2.1	October 2023	1. Removed requirement to conduct Noise Assessment every 5 years, in accordance to the Occupational Health and Safety Regulations 2017 (Vic).