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# Purpose

To describe the University of Melbourne's methodology for managing noise and associated risks that will ensure the:

* health and safety of employee and students; and
* compliance to regulatory requirements.

# Scope

This requirement applies to all employees, students, contractors and other personnel at workplaces under the management or control of the University of Melbourne.

The scope of this requirement does not include nuisance noise below the noise exposure standard.

# DEFINITIONS

**Audiometric test**

The measurement of a person’s air conduction hearing threshold levels using an electro-acoustic instrument (audiometer) equipped with earphones, that provides pure tones of specified discrete frequencies at known hearing levels.

**Decibel (dB)**

The measurement unit for sound pressure levels on a logarithmic scale.

**Noise exposure standard**

Noise levels set by the Occupational Health and Safety Regulations 2017 (Vic) as:

* the 8-hour equivalent continuous sound pressure of 85 decibels (A) measured in A-weighted-decibels referenced to 20 micropascals at a person’s ear position; or
* the C-weighted peak hold sound pressure level reading of 140 decibels (C) measured in decibels referenced to 20 micropascals at a person’s ear position.

# Requirements

## Identification, assessment and control

The Head of School/Division shall ensure that all requirements for noise assessments are completed and where appropriate a noise control plan is documented and implemented (see Section 6.2).

The [Health & Safety: Noise hazard identification form](https://safety.unimelb.edu.au/__data/assets/word_doc/0012/4682892/Noise-hazard-identification-form.docx) can be used to identify the risk to employees from exposure to noise from plant or equipment, or from the general work environment.

Where a risk is identified contact the local [Health and Safety Business Partner](https://safety.unimelb.edu.au/people/community/local-contacts) who can determine if specialist advice is required.

Where an assessment has been completed and indicates a noise level that may exceed the noise exposure standard, the manager/supervisor must ensure that the employee’s exposure to the noise is controlled so as to minimise risk to health and safety. This shall occur in consultation with the employee representative and/or health and safety representative.

Noise surveys must be regularly reviewed, at least every 5 years, or when the environment or work processes change.

## Noise control plan

A noise control plan includes several steps and typically includes the following.

### Step 1: Identify hazards

Complete the [Health & Safety: Noise hazard identification form](https://safety.unimelb.edu.au/__data/assets/word_doc/0012/4682892/Noise-hazard-identification-form.docx).

If any answers are *yes,* then a key noise risk factor has been identified and further assessment is required.

### Step 2: Assess risk factors

Where a further noise assessment is required, the supervisor shall contact local [Health and Safety Business Partner](https://safety.unimelb.edu.au/people/community/local-contacts) for assistance.

The local [Health and Safety Business Partner](https://safety.unimelb.edu.au/people/community/local-contacts) will assist the local area to undertake a noise assessment. Including monitoring and measurements. This may be undertaken by the Business Partner or additional expert support may be required.

### Step 3: Document noise control plan

The written noise control plan shall outline the steps taken to reduce the noise exposure of the employees. The controls shall consider the hierarchy of control to reduce noise.

[Health & Safety: Action plan](https://safety.unimelb.edu.au/__data/assets/word_doc/0005/4698680/health-and-safety-action-plan.docx)

#### Hierarchy of control to reduce noise

**Eliminate the noise**

Alter a process or plant to eliminate the noise completely. For example, a process is altered so that the plant emitting the noise hazard is no longer required.

**Substitute the noise**

Introduce modern equipment or plant that is quieter when operated.

**Isolate or engineer out the noise**

Muffle the noise or create an encasing around the source of the noise.

Relocate the source of the noise to an area where it will not expose employee.

**Implement administrative controls**

Administrative controls may include:

* undertake inductions and training;
* introduce signage indicating that the area that it is a noise hazard zone and precautions are needed to prevent potential hearing loss;
* reduce the time that employees spend in the noisy environment; and
* develop standard operating procedures that include strategies to reduce noise exposure.

**Provide personal protective equipment (PPE)**

Provide hearing protection to all employees and students in noisy locations. Where hearing protection is used employees require information, instruction and training with regarding to wearing and maintaining the PPE.

Where hearing protection is selected to control the risk, appropriate signage must be introduced into the workplace to identify areas and equipment where hearing protection must be worn.

## Purchasing

The supervisor shall ensure that goods purchased comply with statutory requirements and do not exceed the specified levels. Where equipment has noise emissions above the thresholds then appropriate shielding and noise control measures will be implemented.

## Audiometric test

Where the noise exposure standard may be exceeded and/or hearing protection must be worn, the supervisor shall arrange for audiometric testing of the affected employees.

Audiometric testing shall be provided within three months of an employee starting work and at two yearly intervals thereafter.

For any enquiry, please contact Health and Safety Services;

ohs-enquiries@unimelb.edu.au

# References

*Occupational Health and Safety Act 2004* (Vic)

*Occupational Health and Safety Regulations 2017* (Vic)

Compliance code. Noise

# RESPONSIBILITIES

Head of School/Division

Supervisor

# Associated DOCUMENTATION

## Processes

Nil

## Forms

[Health & Safety: Noise hazard identification form](https://safety.unimelb.edu.au/__data/assets/word_doc/0012/4682892/Noise-hazard-identification-form.docx)

[Health & Safety: Action plan](https://safety.unimelb.edu.au/__data/assets/word_doc/0005/4698680/health-and-safety-action-plan.docx)

## Guidance

Nil