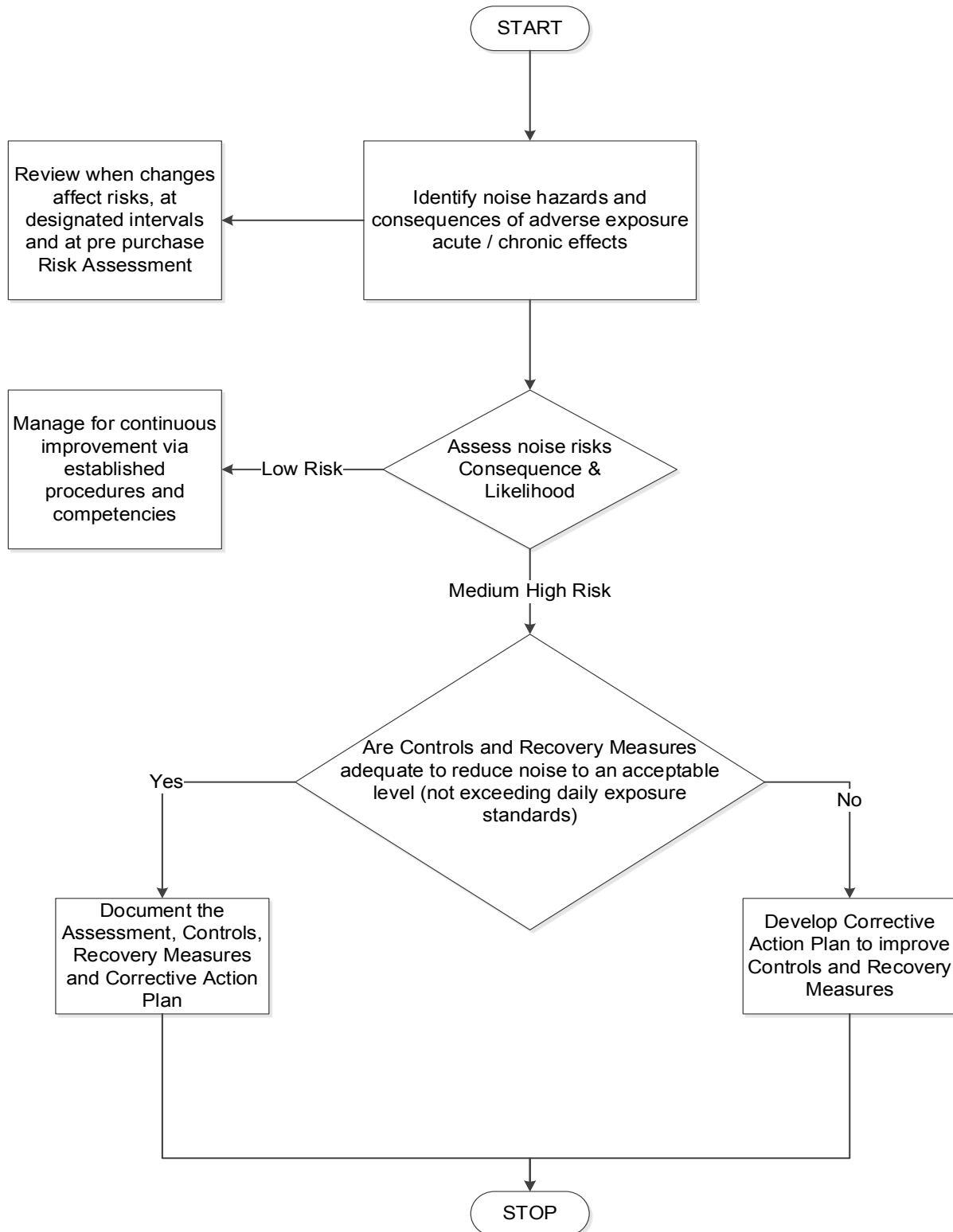


# NOISE MANAGEMENT

## 1.0 SUMMARY / FLOWCHART



**2.0 RESPONSIBILITY**

<b>Organisational Level</b>	<b>Health and Safety Responsibilities</b>
<b>Level 1</b> ( <i>General Manager, Group Directors</i> )	Provide adequate resources to ensure that the requirements of this procedure are implemented and health and safety issues associated with noise are effectively managed.
	Ensure that noise criteria are included in contract specifications for the supply of plant and equipment.
	Ensure screening audiogram is included in Pre-Placement Health Assessment for prospective employees who have previously been exposed to noise and/or whose proposed employment may subject them to a noisy environment.
<b>Level 2</b> ( <i>Section Manager, Unit Manager / Unit Co-ordinator, Project Manager</i> )	Ensure the requirements of this procedure are implemented effectively within the areas of their control.
	Mangers will ensure appropriate noise control strategies when required.
	Ensure that hearing protectors selected for use within SCC comply with the requirements of AS 1270 Acoustic Hearing Protectors.
<b>Level 3</b> ( <i>Coordinator within a Unit, Team Leader, Supervisor, Ganger or Leading Hand or Operator</i> )	Ensure that the requirements for the use of hearing protectors are written into Safe Work Instructions, or similar documents.
	Ensure that all workers required to wear hearing protection have received information, instruction and training regarding its limitations, correct use, inspection, maintenance and storage.
	Provide appropriate supervision to ensure that workers required to wear hearing protectors, wear it when and where specified
	Ensure that safety signage and labelling specifying the use of hearing protection are maintained in good condition and, where required, replaced.
	Comply with the wearing of hearing protectors when present in designated areas or when using designated equipment/tools.
<b>Level 4</b> ( <i>Team Member, Operator Attendant, Trainee, Apprentice</i> )	Maintain, use and store hearing protectors in accordance with procedures.
	Attend training when required on the limitations, correct use, inspection, maintenance, and storage of hearing protectors.

<b>Level 5 (Volunteer, Contractor, Other)</b>	Comply with the wearing of hearing protectors when present in designated areas or when using designated equipment/tools.
	Maintain, use and store hearing protectors in accordance with procedures.
	Attend training when required on the limitations, correct use, inspection, maintenance, and storage of hearing protectors.

### **3.0 PURPOSE & SCOPE**

#### **3.1 PURPOSE**

- 3.1.1 The purpose of this procedure is to reduce the incidence and severity of hearing loss resulting from excessive exposure of workers to noise in Shoalhaven City Council’s (SCC) workplaces.
- 3.1.2 Ensure that the management of SCC’s workplaces assess and control risks arising from exposure of workers to noise in workplaces, and
- 3.1.3 Provide management with the tools and techniques to comply with the requirements of Part 4.1 of the WHS Regulation 2017.

#### **3.2 SCOPE**

- 3.2.1 This procedure applies to all SCC’s workplaces and to all persons in those workplaces who might be exposed to noise.

### **4.0 PROCEDURE**

#### **4.1 IDENTIFICATION OF HAZARDOUS NOISE**

- 4.1.1 SCC will ensure that the noise that workers are exposed to at the workplace does not exceed the “exposure standard for noise”.
- 4.1.2 P14.F01 Noise Risk Assessment Form will be used, in consultation with workers, to determine if workers’ noise exposure levels are likely to exceed the “exposure standard for noise”. If it is likely that workers are exposed to workplace noise that exceeds the “exposure standard for noise”, Managers will arrange a noise assessment.
- 4.1.3 Noise assessments will be conducted on all noisy areas / tasks / plant on site in accordance with the Managing Noise and Preventing Hearing Loss at Work Code of Practice 2018 and AS/NZS 1269.1:2005. (R2016) Noise Assessment will be recorded (external experts reports are acceptable).
- 4.1.4 A noise assessment will:
  - 4.1.4.1 identify which workers are at risk of hearing loss;
  - 4.1.4.2 determine what noise sources and processes are causing that risk;

- 4.1.4.3 identify if and what kind of noise control measures could be implemented; and
- 4.1.4.4 Check the effectiveness of existing control measures.
- 4.1.4.5 A noise assessment will be done by a competent person. A competent person will be selected as having the qualifications, training and experience to:
  - a) understand what is required by the WHS Regulations for noise;
  - b) have the ability to accurately calibrate audiometric testing instruments;
  - c) know how to take the measurements properly; and
  - d) interpret the results of the noise measurements.
- 4.1.4.6 Managers will arrange for noise assessments to be repeated every 2 years, or more frequently if there are possible changes to noise on site (e.g. new machinery or worker complaints) or incidents (e.g. hearing loss claims).

## **4.2 CONTROL OF HAZARDOUS NOISE**

- 4.2.1 If noise assessments determine that workers are exposed to workplace noise that exceeds the “exposure standard for noise”, Managers will arrange to eliminate workplace noise so far as is reasonably practice (e.g. ceasing to use a noisy machine or changing the way work is carried out so hazardous noise is not produced).
- 4.2.2 If it is not reasonably practicable to eliminate the source of noise, Managers will arrange to minimise the risk associated with hearing loss so far as is reasonably practicable and in consultation with workers.
- 4.2.3 This will include ensuring that the noise does not exceed the exposure standard by applying one or more of the following measures:
  - 4.2.3.1 substitute the hazard with quieter plant or processes
  - 4.2.3.2 modify plant and processes to reduce the noise using engineering controls (e.g. fixing damping materials such as rubber, or stiffening panels to reduce vibration)
  - 4.2.3.3 isolate the source of noise from people by using distance, barriers, enclosures and sound-absorbing surfaces.
- 4.2.4 If there is a remaining risk, it will be minimised, so far as is reasonably practicable, by implementing administrative controls (e.g. limiting the time workers spend in noisy areas by moving them to quiet work before their daily noise exposure levels exceed the exposure standard).
- 4.2.5 SCC will carry out regular reviews of risk control measures to ensure their effectiveness.

#### **4.3 PERSONAL HEARING PROTECTORS**

- 4.3.1 If a risk still remains, then as a last resort or supplementary control, suitable personal hearing protectors will be provided and used in accordance with the manufacturer’s instructions and the Managing Noise and Preventing Hearing Loss at Work Code of Practice 2018.
- 4.3.2 Only Class 5 personal hearing protectors will be purchased and provided at sites where noise assessments have recorded measurements over an LAeq,8h of 105 dB(A).
- 4.3.3 Personal hearing protectors will be selected, in consultation with workers, with consideration of the most suitable device for the task or tasks (ear muffs are preferred where workers hands get dirty and may contaminate ear plugs, ear plugs are preferred in hot environments where ear muffs can cause sweating).
- 4.3.4 SCC will provide suitable storage containers for personal hearing protectors to keep them clean and in good condition.
- 4.3.5 SCC will provide replacement personal hearing protectors when ear muffs are worn or damaged and for each use of disposable ear plugs.
- 4.3.6 Personal hearing protectors will be regularly inspected and maintained to ensure they remain in serviceable and clean condition. The inspections should check that:
  - 4.3.6.1 ear muff seals are undamaged;
  - 4.3.6.2 the tension of the headband is not reduced;
  - 4.3.6.3 there are no unauthorised modifications; and
  - 4.3.6.4 compressible ear-plugs are soft, pliable and clean.
- 4.3.7 Personal hearing protectors will be selected and maintained in accordance with AS/NZS 1269.3 Occupational noise management – hearing protector program.

#### **4.4 AUDIOMETRIC TESTING**

- 4.4.1 SCC will arrange audiometric testing for all workers who are frequently required to use personal hearing protectors to control the risk of hearing loss associated with noise that exceeds the exposure standard for noise. Audiometric testing of each exposed worker will be undertaken at SCC’s expense:
  - 4.4.1.1 within 3 months of the worker commencing the work, and
  - 4.4.1.2 at least every 2 years or earlier if deemed by a risk assessment.

#### 4.5 SAFETY SIGNAGE

- 4.5.1 All hazardous noise areas will be clearly identified by signs located at entrances, boundaries or point of operation.
- 4.5.2 Signs that describe the hazard and the protective measures to be taken will be used to designate hazardous noise areas and equipment (e.g. "Hazardous Noise" or "Hearing Protection Required When Machinery in Operation").
- 4.5.3 Where signposting is not practicable, other arrangements will be implemented to ensure that workers and others know when personal hearing protectors are required. For example:
  - 4.5.3.1 attach prominent warning notices to tools and equipment indicating that personal hearing protectors are to be worn when operating them;
  - 4.5.3.2 provide instructions to workers on how to recognise circumstances in which personal hearing protectors are needed; and
  - 4.5.3.3 ensure effective supervision of identified hazardous tasks.

#### 4.6 TRAINING

- 4.6.1 SCC will provide training to all workers that work in areas that have been assessed as a high noise risk.
- 4.6.2 Training will include instruction around the effects of exposure to noise, the reasons behind the control measures, the purpose and nature of audiometric testing, and the selection, use, fit and maintenance of hearing protection devices.

#### 4.7 RECORDS

- 4.7.1 Audiometric testing records of workers, where released to SCC, will be retained under Health Surveillance for the length of the workers employment and at least 10 years thereafter.
- 4.7.2 Noise assessment data will be kept in accordance with P04 Document Control and Records Procedure, (presently a minimum of 30 years).

#### 4.8 REVIEW AND EVALUATION

- 4.8.1 This procedure will be reviewed and updated every (three) 3 years or more often as necessary to ensure relevance and compliance to WHS management system requirements.
- 4.8.2 Review may be carried out at any stage following integration with the core business activities, and can take many forms such as:
  - 4.8.2.1 A review following hazard inspections;

- 4.8.2.2 During audit of a particular service group or branch (e.g. noise assessment / compliance audit);
  - 4.8.2.3 As a feedback mechanism from workers following training;
  - 4.8.2.4 Following an investigation into an illness (e.g. hearing loss), injury, incident or accident;
  - 4.8.2.5 Change in legislative requirements; and
  - 4.8.2.6 Task or process has changed due to enhancements.
- 4.8.3 Following completion of any review, the document will be updated in order to correct any deficiencies and non-conformances. Any changes to this procedure will be conducted in consultation with workers as appropriate and with the WHS Consultation Framework (WHS Committee, Safety Leadership Team and Executive Leadership Team).

## **5.0 REFERENCES & ASSOCIATED DOCUMENTS**

- 5.1** Work Health and Safety Act 2011
- 5.2** Work Health and Safety Regulation 2017
- 5.3** How to manage work health and safety risks: Code of practice 2011
- 5.4** Managing noise and preventing hearing loss at work: Code of Practice 2011
- 5.5** AS/NZS 1269: 2005 Occupational Noise Management Set
- 5.6** AS/NZS 1270: 2002 Acoustics – Hearing Protectors
- 5.7** AS 1319: 1994 Safety Signs for the Occupational Environment
- 5.8** P04 Document Control and Safety Records
- 5.9** P09 Safety Training
- 5.10** P10 Risk Management
- 5.11** P12 Plant and Equipment
- 5.12** P20 Inspection, Testing and Monitoring

**APPENDIX 1 DEFINITIONS**

<b>Audiometric testing</b>	Testing and measurement of the hearing threshold levels of each ear of a person by means of pure tone air conduction threshold tests.
<b>(dB) - Decibel</b>	Unit for measuring sound levels.
<b>Competent Person</b>	Means a person who has acquired through training, qualification, or experience, or a combination of these, the knowledge and skills enabling that person to perform the specified tasks.
<b>Emission</b>	The radiation of sound from a sound source.
<b>Exposure standard for noise</b>	Noise above the noise exposure criteria as set by clause 56 of the WHS Regulation 2011 in relation to a person, means: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <math>L_{Aeq,8h}</math> of 85 dB(A), or</li> <li>• (b) <math>L_{C,peak}</math> of 140 dB(C).</li> </ul> There are two parts to the exposure standard for noise because noise can either cause gradual hearing loss over a period of time or be so loud that it causes immediate hearing loss.
<b><math>L_{Aeq,8h}</math></b>	The eight-hour equivalent continuous A-weighted sound pressure level in decibels (dB(A)) referenced to 20 micropascals, determined in accordance with AS/NZS 1269.1:2005 (Occupational noise management - Measurement and assessment of noise immission and exposure).
<b><math>L_{C,peak}</math></b>	The C-weighted peak sound pressure level in decibels (dB(C)) referenced to 20 micropascals, determined in accordance with AS/NZS 1269.1:2005 (Occupational noise management - Measurement and assessment of noise immission and exposure).
<b>Hazardous Noise</b>	In relation to hearing loss means noise that exceeds the exposure standard for noise in the workplace.
<b>Noise</b>	Sound of any kind, especially unwanted or damaging sound.
<b>Personal hearing protectors</b>	A device, or pair of devices, worn by a person or inserted in the ears of a person to protect the person's hearing.