

Management of Noise Procedure

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Issue No	Date Issued	Purpose of Issue and Description of Amendment
1	April 2014	This document supersedes individual business documents relating to the subject matter. Initial release for the new Group SMS.
2	April 2016	Review of procedure against legislation.
3	May 2018	Routine review – minor changes made.

1. PURPOSE

The purpose of this document is to set the standard for the Business regarding its approach to the management of noise in controlling exposures and risks to the health of its employees and others.

2. SCOPE

This document outlines the roles and responsibilities within ScottishPower for compliance with the Control of Noise at Work Regulations 2005.

The procedure shall be adopted by all areas of ScottishPower and will help to ensure that the identification of noise hazards and their risks are managed effectively.

3. RESPONSIBILITY

Business Directors shall be responsible for implementing the requirements of this document in premises and business operations.

Managers shall assume responsibility for ensuring that an appropriate risk assessment is completed, where pertinent, and also that all control measures specified are followed for all. Managers shall also be responsible for ensuring all information, instruction and training provided is followed to protect against exposure to noise.

The employee has a number of responsibilities, including:

- Reducing the risk by adopting known methods for noise control or best practice
- The correct use and maintenance of tools and machinery
- The correct use of control measures including hearing protection
- Attending health surveillance when required
- Prompt reporting of noise issues

Health & Safety Practitioners shall advise and support managers and employees in observing the requirements of this procedure.

The Occupational Hygienist shall be responsible for ensuring that the necessary technical advice and back up is provided to enable Business Managers to fulfil their responsibilities.

Learning shall deliver, through the use of approved bodies, the required training to equip employees with the necessary information and skills to safely manage noise hazards.

The Procurement Department shall follow a 'positive purchasing' process to ensure low noise tools and equipment are purchased as dictated by the technical specification.

Occupational Health shall carry out Health Surveillance or Health Screening as required and issue a report to managers on fitness for work and/or any medical restrictions.

4. APPROVALS

The Health & Safety Policy & Standards Committee will approve this document.

5. REVIEW FREQUENCY

This document shall be reviewed as dictated by business or regulatory change but at a period of no greater than three years from the last issue date.

6. RELATED DOCUMENTS

Control of Noise at Work Regulations 2005
ScottishPower Group Health and Safety Policy (UKHS-GPO-SMS1001)
Noise Reduction by Design Guidance (UKHS-GSP-SMS3017)

7. DEFINITIONS

- **SNR** - Single Noise Rating

Action Levels: Under the Control of Noise at Work Regulations, action is required if the personal daily noise exposure ($L_{EP,d}$) exceeds defined **action** levels:

- **The lower exposure action value (LEAV)** is a daily or weekly personal exposure ($L_{EP,d}$) of 80 dB (A-weighted)
 - A peak exposure of 135 dB (C-weighted)
- **The upper exposure action value (UEAV)** is a daily or weekly personal exposure ($L_{EP,d}$) of 85 dB (A-weighted)
 - A peak exposure of 137 dB (C-weighted)
- **An exposure limit value (ELV)** has been introduced. A daily or weekly personal exposure ($L_{EP,d}$) of 87 dB (A-weighted)
 - A peak exposure of 140 dB (C-weighted)

The Exposure Action Values are exposure limits at which specific **actions must** be taken depending on the sound pressure level, this **does not include** the effect of hearing protection, and the relevant actions to be taken include the following:

Employer duties at both action values:

- Eliminate risk of exposure to noise wherever reasonably practicable to do so
- Reduce the risk to as low as is reasonably practicable
- Maintain equipment and hearing protection

- Provide information, instruction and training to employees

Employer duties at the lower exposure action value (LEAV)

- Assess risks and record assessment
- Provide appropriate hearing protection on request

Employer duties at the upper exposure action value (UEAV)

- Develop a control strategy/action plan to reduce noise levels (over time)
- Designate hearing protection zones where technically feasible and exposure so justifies
- Provide hearing protection and enforce its use
- Provide health surveillance, ie audiometric testing

The exposure limit value (ELV) is effectively a maximum exposure limit permitted for any one individual over the course of one day. This limit takes into account the effect of hearing protection. For example, if an employee's personal exposure is measured as 98 dB(A) averaged over an 8 hour shift, then the type of hearing protection used must reduce exposure below 87dB(A), but in any case as low as possible and certainly below the UEAV. This is to ensure that the actual personal exposure at the ear is below this limit value.

Control Measures

Noise levels must be reduced as low as is reasonably practicable by engineering methods such as insulation, segregation, good maintenance regimes and purchasing and design. Appendix 1 outlines specific information for each ScottishPower Business.

A noise level measurement must be retaken following any engineering modifications. Where an area is identified as being within the UEAV and staff or visitors require access, this must be designated a Hearing Protection Zone and signage posted accordingly.

Hearing protection must be made freely available to all staff and visitors entering a designated hearing protected area and supervisors must enforce its use. All hearing protection provided should be the equivalent of at least SNR30, be it muffs, plugs or moulded hearing protection.

The use of hearing protection must only be considered as a last resort where engineering and other control methods have not reduced the noise level sufficiently.

Hearing protection must be maintained and records kept of issue dates.

All staff and visitors provided with hearing protection will be appropriately trained in its use, application and maintenance.

8. PREFACE

A noise assessment will be carried out for all areas and equipment that carries the potential to cause hearing injuries to operators, staff and other persons by a trained and competent person.

The findings will be reported and recorded in accordance with the individual Business process either electronically, as a hard copy, or both.

Specific areas for assessment for the different business streams are appended to this document.

9. PROCESS

Reflecting ScottishPower's commitment to controlling personal noise exposures, each business shall:

- Provide arrangements to identify, evaluate and control noise exposures in accordance with legal requirements.
- Ensure all measurement equipment is from an approved manufacturer and carries a current calibration certificate.
- Make a suitable and sufficient risk assessment of the effectiveness of control measures to protect against occupational noise exposure.
- Ensure that all identified hearing protection zones are clearly demarcated and adhered to by all entering the area, irrespective of entry time.
- Ensure that all employees and contractors exposed to potentially noisy environments are provided with sufficient information, instruction and training to avoid or control potentially harmful noise exposure.
- Document and control procedures and guidance relating to the control of noise.
- Update, review and amend these arrangements biennially or whenever required by regulatory changes or in line with industry best practice.
- Provide a structure that will ensure the effective and standardised management of noise exposures within each operational site.
- Ensure the competence and professionalism of any person(s) assigned to carry out or analyse noise measurements or who provides advice and guidance.
- Encourage and support employees to report any concerns related to noise exposures.
- Provide health surveillance to all employees exposed to noise at or above the Upper Exposure Action Value (UEAV).
- Ensure that relevant noise information, including monitoring plans and limits, is provided to all employees and contractors as required by risk assessment.
- Ensure that all contractors are competent and comply with ScottishPower's standards.

- Carry out a re-assessment of all noise assessments at a two yearly interval or following alterations or modifications to the work area or equipment, within this period.
- Where defects have been identified as a contributor to the noise levels, these will be logged and fixed as soon as reasonably practicable. Re-assessment following the repair will be undertaken to verify improvement.

Use of Hearing Protection

The provision of hearing protection is considered the last resort, however for ScottishPower there are many instances where the design of the plant or the location of work renders it the most practical form of control against high noise levels. In order for it to provide optimal protection, hearing protection **must** fit the person and be worn for the **duration** of exposure to the high noise level, no matter how long or short.

The seal generated between the individual and the hearing protection is critical to obtaining optimal protection. Thus all users of hearing protection will be trained in how to fit and maintain their chosen form of protection and when to replace it, typically annually.

Where personal moulded hearing protection has been provided for those working predominantly in industrial settings, it must be kept safe by the individual and changed every 5 years.

Hired Equipment

When a need has been identified to hire equipment for a specific task, those involved will be required to work with the hire company to ensure that low noise equipment is brought in where practicable to do so.

10. UNCONTROLLED DOCUMENTATION

Printed documents are uncontrolled. The latest version can be accessed through the employee portal.

APPENDIX 1

BUSINESS SPECIFIC ACTIONS

GENERATION BUSINESS

Outages: During outage work the principal noise hazard can be temporarily eliminated for a short time. It is during this time that certain working conditions may render the requirement for hearing protection to be temporarily suspended. Grounds for such a decision would include the removal of the risk of impaired communication through 'over protection' (resulting from the hearing protection).

The station manager holds ultimate responsibility for the health and safety of everyone on site, including exposure to noise, however outage works are generally carried out under the auspices of the CDM Regulations. Here, it is the principal contractor who has the responsibility for ensuring a safe working environment for those under his jurisdiction. Therefore, in order for the mandatory hearing protection requirement to be lifted there must be agreement between the station manager and the outage project manager. The principal contractor and his sub-contractors must be able to demonstrate the effectiveness of their risk assessments through the provision of quantitative monitoring where practicable, for example noise measurements. All such monitoring must be undertaken by a nominated competent person.

The principal contractor must also consider the type of work being undertaken, regardless of whether the unit is running or not and the location of the work. This may be variable, eg during grinding or hammering activities, and the need to impose a temporary introduction may be required at such times. As noise generation during the outage can vary on a daily basis, it is important that operators working in the area are given suitable instruction, information and training regarding their working environment and the tasks being undertaken.

The occupational hygienist should be sought to provide advice regarding verification of noise levels or the suspension of hearing protection zones to ensure others are not being placed at risk.

RETAIL BUSINESS

Noise readings collected at the new Meter Testing Facility (Newarthill) have shown all equipment to be below the LEAV.

APPENDIX 1 (Cont'd)

ENERGY NETWORKS BUSINESS

Jointers: The jointer can be exposed to noise through the use of specific tools required for the work, eg the Izumi wrench and the SDS drill (occasional use). Both generate high noise levels and hearing protection must be worn during every tool use, however short the duration.

Linesmen: The linesman can be exposed to noise through the use of specific tools required for the work, eg the SDS drill, petrol auger and hammer drill. All generate high noise levels and hearing protection must be worn during every tool use, however short the duration.

Fitters: The fitter can be exposed to noise through the use of specific tools required for the work, eg the SDS drill, hammer drill and tripping of breakers. All generate high noise levels and hearing protection must be worn during every tool use, however short the duration.

Traffic noise: where work is being carried out on a busy city street, noise levels can exceed the UEAV. Therefore, a risk assessment must be undertaken when involved in street works, especially when high noise tool use is required. Even if tools are not in use, hearing protection may be a requirement when working on a busy street if those involved are having to raise their voice to communicate two metres apart, which suggests noise levels are over 80 dB(A).

RENEWABLES BUSINESS

The management of operational windfarms is predominantly control room based where there is no exposure to industrial noise.

Maintenance and construction work is currently undertaken by contractors and noise exposure to ScottishPower staff only occurs during the undertaking of site visits and audits whilst overseeing the work programme, which is becoming more frequent. In such circumstances, staff are required to complete the risk assessment which will identify the need for hearing protection.