



Damage caused to your hearing by exposure to loud noise can be permanent. As well as hearing loss, many workers also suffer from constant ringing or buzzing noises in one or both ears. This is known as tinnitus and there is no cure.

Noise-induced hearing loss can build up over time. You may not notice the effects each day, but over a period of time your hearing can get worse from the noise you are exposed to at work. When hearing damage becomes significant you may notice the following.

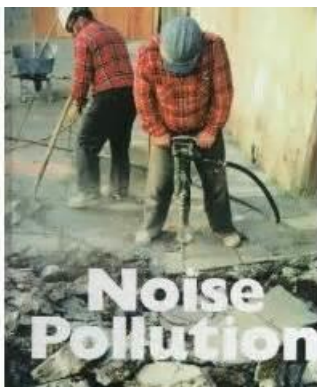
Hearing loss caused by work is preventable, but once your hearing has gone it will not come back. Some 17,000 people in the UK suffer deafness, ringing in the ears or other ear conditions caused by excessive noise at work. This guidance is for employers, workers and their advisers. It tells you what you need to do to reduce and control the risks from noise at work.

Find out more from HSE

<http://www.hse.gov.uk/noise/index.htm>

### Employers Responsibilities – Legal Duties

The Control of Noise at Work Regulations 2005 (Noise Regulations 2005) require



employers to prevent or reduce risks to health and safety from exposure to noise at work. The Regulations require you as an employer to:

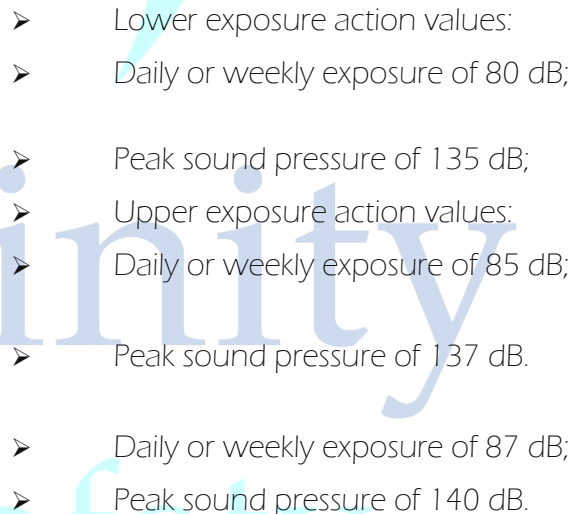
- Assess the risks to your employees from noise at work;
- Take action to reduce the noise exposure that produces those risks;
- Provide your employees with hearing protection if you

cannot reduce the noise exposure enough by using other methods;

- ## Noise levels

The Noise Regulations require you to take specific action at certain action values. These relate to:

- The values are:



<http://www.hse.gov.uk/noise/employers.htm>

## Hearing Protection

How can hearing protection be used effectively?

### Do's

- Make sure the protectors give enough protection - aim at least to get below 85 dB at the ear;
- Target the use of protectors to the noisy tasks and jobs in a working day;
- Select protectors which are suitable for the working environment - consider how comfortable and hygienic they are;
- Think about how they will be worn with other protective equipment (eg hard hats, dust masks and eye protection);
- Provide a range of protectors so that employees can choose ones which suit them.

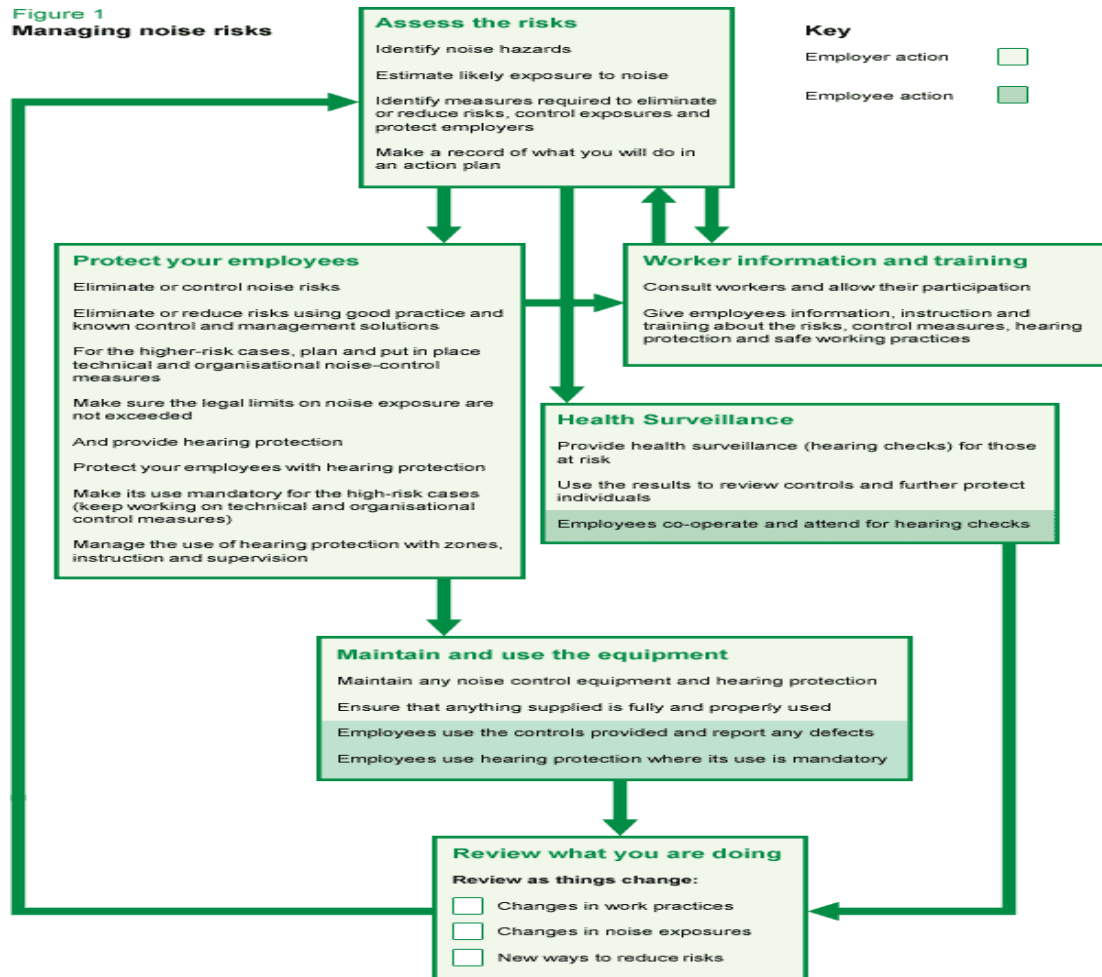


### Don't's

- Provide protectors which cut out too much noise - this can cause isolation, or lead to an unwillingness to wear them;
- Make the use of hearing protectors compulsory where the law doesn't require it;
- Have a 'blanket' approach to hearing protection - better to target its use and only encourage people to wear it when they need to.

Trinity  
Safety

**Figure 1**  
**Managing noise risks**



Find out more information on hearing protection from HSE  
<http://www.hse.gov.uk/noise/hearingprotection.htm>

Take a look at our Toolbox Talk

[Noise Toolbox Talk & Record Sheet](#)

Worried about your hearing find out more from

<http://www.hse.gov.uk/noise/worried.htm>

Trinity  
Safety