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## **The Merchant Shipping and Fishing Vessels (Control of Noise at Work) Regulations 2007**

**Notice to all Ship and Fishing Vessel Owners, Ship Operators, Charterers, Managers, Skippers and other Employers of Seafarers, Masters, Chief Engineers, Officers, Ratings and other workers on merchant ships, crew of fishing vessels, Small Commercially Operated Vessels, Yachts with paid Crew and self-employed persons working on board: Classification Societies, Certifying Authorities, Test Houses and Competent Persons.**

*This notice should be read in conjunction with MGN 636 (M) Amendment 1 which provides details and guidance on interpretation of the Merchant Shipping and Fishing Vessel (Health and Safety at Work) Regulations 1997, MGN 587 (F) Amendment 1 (in respect of Fishing Vessels) and the Merchant Shipping and Fishing Vessels (Control of Noise at Work) Regulations 1997, MGN 447 (M+F) Amendment 1 Merchant Shipping and Fishing Vessel (Control of Noise at Work) Regulations 1997 Procedure for Seeking Exemptions and replaces MGN 352 (M+F) Amendment 1 The Merchant Shipping and Fishing Vessels (Control of Noise at Work) Regulations 2007 and MGN 377 (M+F) Sound Advice – Noise at Work from Music and Entertainment.*

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### **Summary**

This notice provides guidance on the requirements for the protection of seafarers, fishermen and workers from the risks related to exposure to noise at work according to the Merchant Shipping and Fishing Vessels (Control of Noise at Work) Regulations 2007 which came into force on 23 February 2008.

It should not however be regarded as definitive. The way these Regulations apply to any particular case can vary according to circumstances and from vessel to vessel. Each shipowner, fishing vessel owner and employer should therefore assess how the requirements of these Regulations apply to the specific circumstances of each vessel and introduce measures to implement those requirements accordingly.

Information contained in this notice reflects the Merchant Shipping (Maritime Labour Convention) (Health and Safety) (Amendment) Regulations (S.I. 2014/1616) (“the MLC Health and Safety amendments”) and the Merchant Shipping (Work in Fishing Convention) (Consequential and Minor Amendments) Regulations (S.I. 2018/1109) (the “Work in Fishing Consequential Amendments”).

The two sets of amendments extend the duties to protect “workers” in health and safety legislation so that they protect all seafarers and fishermen, regardless of their employment status, and duties on employers also apply to shipowners and fishing vessel owners. References in this notice are therefore “shipowners and employers” and “seafarers and other workers.” In this notice, “shipowner” includes “fishing vessel owner”, and “seafarer” includes “fisherman”.

This notice updates references to EU Directive 2003/10/EC which has been in effect in the UK prior to the 1st January 2021 and is now retained in UK law as the Merchant Shipping and Fishing Vessels (Control of Noise at Work) Regulations 2007, after the end of the EU Exit implementation period.



## 1. Introduction

The Merchant Shipping and Fishing Vessels (Control of Noise at Work) Regulations 2007 (SI 2007/3075) (the “Noise Regulations”) implemented EC Directive 2003/10/EC, which is now retained in UK law. The Noise Regulations introduced requirements for the protection of workers from the risks related to exposure to noise at work. The Noise Regulations build on the Merchant Shipping and Fishing (Health and Safety at Work) Regulations 1997 (SI 1997/2962), as amended, (the “General Duties” Regulations), by requiring that risk assessment under the General Duties Regulations considers the risks to workers of exposure to noise.

- 1.2 The Merchant Shipping and Fishing Vessels (Control of Noise at Work) Regulations 2007 provide protection to Seafarers and workers on ships, fishing vessels and other marine craft including those on inland waters and yachts with paid crew. The Noise Regulations are broadly equivalent to The Control of Noise at Work Regulations 2005. The Health and Safety Executive have provided useful information about noise and key facts <http://www.hse.gov.uk/noise/keyfacts.htm>
- 1.3 The first part of this Marine Guidance Note provides a summary of the main provisions of the Noise Regulations. Annex 1 provides further guidance on the application of the Noise Regulations.

## 2. Main provisions of the Noise Regulations - Application (Regulation 4)

- 2.1 Regulation 4(2) provides for a limited derogation from the requirements of the Noise Regulations for vessels being used in the course of public service activities or activities for the purpose of civil protection services where because of characteristics peculiar to those activities full compliance with the Noise Regulations is not possible.
- 2.2 For the purposes of the derogation referred to in paragraph 2.1 above the Regulations define “civil protection services” as including the fire and rescue and ambulance services and search and rescue services provided by any other person. This derogation will also apply to any vessel engaged in search and rescue activities when answering a distress call or when requested to do so by HM Coastguard or the appropriate authority of another state.
- 2.3 Similarly for the purposes of the derogation referred to in paragraph 2.1 above the Regulations define “public service activities” as including the activities of the armed forces, HM Coastguard, HM Revenue and Customs, immigration officers, police, prison officers and the security and intelligence services. This derogation will also apply to any vessel engaged in matters relating to national security whether or not it is directly operated by or under the control of the security services. This derogation does not apply to ferries whether operated by a public body or not.
- 2.4 The derogations referred to in paragraphs 2.2 and 2.3 above only apply to the specific provision, or part thereof, where compliance is not possible because of the activity being carried out and only for the length of time when compliance is not possible. All other provisions are to be complied with in full and even for those provisions where full compliance is not possible the shipowner and employer must ensure that the health and safety of seafarers and workers who are or who are likely to be exposed to risks from noise as a result is protected so far as is reasonably practicable.

## 3. Noise Exposure Action Values and Limit Values (Regulation 5)

- 3.1 The Noise Regulations set lower and upper exposure action values and exposure limit values as follows:
  - (i) lower exposure action values –
    - (a) a daily or weekly personal noise exposure of 80dB (A-weighted); and
    - (b) a peak sound pressure of 135 dB(C-weighted)
  - (ii) upper exposure action values –
    - (a) a daily or weekly personal noise exposure of 85dB (A-weighted); and



- (b) a peak sound pressure of 137 dB(C-weighted)
- (iii) exposure limit values –
  - (a) a daily or weekly personal noise exposure of 87dB (A-weighted); and
  - (b) a peak sound pressure of 140 dB(C-weighted)

3.1.1 The two exposure action values are levels of 'daily or weekly personal exposure to noise'. These depend on the noise levels in the working area and how long people are exposed to the noise. The exposure action values take account of noise exposure over the whole working day or shift.

3.2. When applying the lower and upper exposure action values, no account is to be taken of attenuation provided by individual hearing protectors worn by the seafarer or worker. In the case of exposure limit values; account may be taken of attenuation provided by individual hearing protectors worn by the seafarer or worker.

#### **4. Assessment of Risks (Regulation 6)**

- 4.1 The shipowner and employer's risk assessment should –
- determine whether the exposure action values and the exposure limit values are exceeded;
  - identify the seafarer and workers at risk from hearing damage (so an action plan to control noise exposure can be prepared);
  - determine the daily/weekly personal noise exposure of seafarers and workers;
  - identify additional information to comply with the legislation, e.g. whether noise control measures or hearing protection are needed, and, if so, where and what type.
  - keep a record of the noise assessment;
  - regularly review the noise assessment whenever there is a change in the work being undertaken or when new equipment is introduced which may alter noise levels. It is however good practice to review the assessment every two years, as noise levels can change over time as, for example, machinery wears out or working practices change; and
  - use the assessment to develop an action plan for introducing noise control measures.

#### **5. Elimination or Control of Exposure to Noise (Regulation 7)**

5.1 The shipowner and employer is required to ensure that the risks arising from exposure to noise identified by the risk assessment are either eliminated or reduced as far as reasonably practicable. If the risk assessment show that the upper exposure action values are exceeded, the shipowner and employer must establish and implement a programme of measures to reduce the exposure to noise. The measurement of the noise levels in such circumstances must not take account of the wearing of personal hearing protectors.

5.2. The exposure limit value is an absolute limit and seafarers and workers must not work where noise exposure exceeds this level. In applying the absolute limit, the shipowners and employers may take account of the effective reduction provided by any individual hearing protectors worn by the seafarer or worker. If despite the measures required to be taken by the Noise Regulations exposures above the exposure limit values are detected, the shipowner and employer must:

- (a) take immediate action to reduce the exposure to below the exposure limit values;
- (b) identify the reasons why overexposure has occurred; and
- (c) amend the protection and prevention measures in order to avoid any recurrence.

#### **6. Hearing Protection (Regulation 8)**

6.1 Personal hearing protectors are to be made available to any seafarer and worker who is likely to be exposed to noise above a lower exposure action value. In so far as possible, shipowners and employers should ensure that seafarers and workers exposed to noise at or above the upper exposure action value wear their hearing protectors, and that areas where such protectors should be worn are clearly demarcated and signed.



- 6.2 Hearing protection should conform to the requirements of the Merchant Shipping and Fishing Vessels (Personal Protective Equipment) Regulations 1999 (SI 1999/2205) and Merchant Shipping Notice - MSN 1870 Amendment 1 and signs should conform to the requirements of the Merchant Shipping and Fishing Vessels (Safety Signs and Signals) Regulations 2001 (SI 2001/3444) and Merchant Guidance Note – MGN 556. In determining whether exposure action values are exceeded account may not be taken of any reduction provided by any individual hearing protectors worn by the seafarer or worker.
- 6.3 It should be noted that the noise attenuation effects of “ear muff” type personal hearing protectors may be reduced if the seafarer or worker wearing them is also wearing glasses. In such circumstances the shipowner and employer may wish to consider whether other forms of hearing protection might be more appropriate.

## **7. Worker information and training (Regulation 9)**

- 7.1 Shipowners and employers are also responsible for providing seafarers and workers with sufficient information and training to ensure that they are aware of potential risks to health from exposure to noise.

Such information and training is to include –

- the nature of such risks;
- details of the measures taken in order to eliminate or reduce to a minimum the risks from noise;
- the exposure limit values and the exposure action values;
- the results of the risk assessment carried out;
- the correct use of hearing protectors - including use when wearing glasses;
- the circumstances in which seafarers and workers are entitled to health surveillance under these Regulations;
- safe working practices to minimise exposure to mechanical vibration;
- how to detect and report signs of injury; and
- the importance of detecting and reporting signs of injury.

## **8. Health Surveillance and Record Keeping (Regulation 10)**

- 8.1 If the risk assessment identifies a risk from exposure to noise, the shipowner and employer is required to provide health surveillance.
- 8.2 Regulation 22 specifically prohibits any costs, incurred as a result of compliance with any provision of the Noise Regulations, being charged to any seafarer and worker.

## **9. Consultation with seafarers and workers (Regulation 11)**

- 9.1 There must be consultation with seafarers and workers and their representatives on matters covered by the Noise Regulations and in particular on;
- (a) the assessment of risks;
  - (b) measures taken to eliminate or reduce risks arising from exposure to noise; and
  - (c) the choice of individual hearing protectors to be provided by the employer.

## **10. Persons on whom duties are imposed (Regulation 12)**

- 10.1 It is the duty of every shipowner and employer, and any other person on whom a duty is imposed by the Noise Regulations to comply with the relevant provisions of those Regulations.
- 10.2 Where any duty under the Noise Regulations is imposed on individuals who do not have responsibility for the operation of the ship, such duty is extended to “any person who does have control of the matter to which the Regulation in question relates”, which may be a particular shipowner, employer or employers or some other party.
- 10.3 In addition to the responsibility placed on the shipowner(s) and employer(s) there is a responsibility placed on every seafarer and worker to which the Regulations apply to make full and proper use of all protective equipment provided by the shipowner and



employer, and to give effect to all instruction and training with which the seafarer and worker has been provided.

## **11. Exemptions (Regulation 13)**

- 11.1 There is very limited scope for the Secretary of State (in practice MCA) to grant exemptions from compliance with the requirements of regulations 7(4) and (5) and 8(1) and (2) of the Noise Regulations, following consultation with the shipowner and employer, seafarers and workers or their representatives, and medical bodies as appropriate.
- 11.2 Applications for the issue of an exemption certificate will need to provide detailed justification of the need for the exemption and set out the specific circumstances that would render compliance with the requirements of regulations 7(4), 7(5), 8(1) or 8(2), as appropriate, more hazardous than not using personal hearing protectors.
- 11.3 Any exemptions issued will be ship specific, in writing and limited to a maximum period of 4 years. However, they may be withdrawn at any time if they are no longer justified. See MGN 447 (M+F) Amendment 1 Merchant Shipping and Fishing Vessel (Control of Noise at Work) Regulations 1997 Procedure for Seeking Exemptions.

## **12. Offences and penalties (Regulations 14 - 16)**

- 12.1 Regulations 14 to 16 are the enforcement provisions; any contravention of the Noise Regulations is an offence. There is also provision for corporate offences and where any proceedings are instituted for an offence under the Noise Vibrations which consists of a failure to comply with a duty or requirement to do something so far as is reasonably practicable, it will be for the defendant to prove that compliance with that duty or requirement was not reasonably practicable.

## **13. Calculation of Daily and Weekly Personal Noise Exposure Levels and Peak Sound Pressure Levels**

- 13.1 Annex 3 sets out the formulae to be used for the calculation of daily and weekly personal noise exposure levels and peak sound pressure levels. This information is primarily included for use by consultants or other persons who need to ascertain the various levels to which seafarers and workers are likely to be exposed. Spreadsheet based models which combine operator work patterns with measured area noise levels to yield information on operator noise exposure levels may also assist in identifying seafarers and workers at greatest risk to be identified and to show which machinery areas are dominant in creating this risk.

## **14. HSG260 Sound advice – control of noise at work in music and entertainment**

- 14.1 The implementation of the Noise Regulations was deferred until 6 April 2008, in relation to noise arising from the provision of music and entertainment on ships, to allow time for practical guidelines to be drawn up to help workers and employers in the music and entertainment sectors meet the requirements of these Regulations. The latest entertainment industry guidance document HSG260 is available on the Health and Safety Executive website;- <https://www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/books/hsg260.htm>
- 14.2 HSG260 was written to support land-based regulations, The Control of Noise at Work Regulations 2005, however guidance is equally relevant to the provision of music and entertainment on ships, including vessels on inland waterways, although the applicable legislation for ships will be the Merchant Shipping and Fishing Vessels (Control of Noise at Work) Regulations 2007 and not the HSE's Control of Noise at Work Regulations 2005.
- 14.3 **The Code of Safe Working Practices for Merchant Seafarers (COSWP) (“the Code”)**  
Chapter 12 contains the latest guidance created with the collaboration of representatives within the shipping industry. See 12.1-12.8 for guidance on noise risks and mitigation, and 12.9 in respect of noise arising from music and entertainment. Details on acquiring a copy of “the Code” can be found on [www.gov.uk](http://www.gov.uk)



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## GUIDANCE ON THE APPLICATION OF THE CONTROL OF NOISE REGULATIONS

*This note gives general guidance on the implementation of the Regulations. Further guidance on dealing with noise on merchant vessels is included in the Code of Safe Working Practices for Merchant Seafarers.*

### How to determine if there is a noise problem on a ship

1. This will depend on how loud the noise is and how long people are exposed to it. As a simple guide there *may* be a problem if:
  - personnel have to shout to be clearly heard by someone 2 metres away;
  - a anyone's ears are still ringing after leaving the workplace;
  - personnel use equipment which causes loud explosive noises such as cartridge-operated tools or guns;
  - personnel are exposed to high level impact noise from hammering on metal benches; chipping machines or metal endplates on the decks of Ro-Ro vessel ramps;
  - there is machinery such as diesel engines, generators etc running in a confined space such as a ship's engine room;
  - personnel not engaged in the provision of entertainment (e.g. waiters), have to enter or remain in noisy areas such as discos, nightclubs etc on cruise ships whilst carrying out their duties.

Examples of noise levels in different locations, with examples of typical dB(A) levels are given in Note A to this Annex. Note B to this Annex provides information on daily exposure to different sound levels and recommended maximum limits for different areas on board ship.

### Noise assessment

2. If the risk assessment indicates that any seafarer or worker is likely to be exposed to noise exceeding the lower exposure action values in the preceding paragraph, the shipowner and employer must arrange for a competent person to assess the actual level of noise exposure. A competent person should know how to carry out a noise assessment in the particular circumstances of the workplace the ability to do the job properly and to know their limits is more important than formal qualifications. The aim of the noise assessment is to:
  - identify the seafarers and workers at risk from hearing damage (so an action plan to control noise exposure can be prepared);
  - determine the daily/weekly personal noise exposure of seafarers and workers;
  - identify additional considerations necessary for complying with the legislation, eg whether noise control measures or hearing protection are needed, and, if so, where and what type.

The shipowner and employer should:

- keep a record of the noise assessment;
  - regularly review the noise assessment whenever there is a change in the work being undertaken or when new equipment is introduced which may alter noise levels. It is however good practice to review the assessment every two years, as noise levels can change over time as, for example, machinery wears out or working practices change;
  - use the assessment to develop an action plan for introducing noise control measures.
3. Where seafarers and workers are likely to be exposed to the upper exposure action value shipowners and employers must, so far as is reasonably practicable, reduce their exposure to noise in ways other than by providing hearing protection. The noise assessment should identify the sources of noise in the workplace and suggest ways of reducing noise exposure. This information should then be used to:
    - tackle the immediate risk, e.g. by providing hearing protection (NOTE - this is only a short term stop-gap measure while other controls are being investigated and developed);



- identify which steps are reasonably practicable to reduce the noise exposure of seafarers or workers by engineering or organisational means;
- establish priorities for action (e.g. consider where there could be immediate benefits, what changes may need to be phased in over a longer period of time and the number of people exposed to the noise in each case);
- appoint someone on the vessel to be responsible for ensuring that action is taken, monitoring the programme and reassessing noise exposures after any changes in the workplace.

4. There are many ways of reducing noise and noise exposure and no single technique will be appropriate for every situation. Shipowners and employers should therefore firstly think about how to remove the risk caused by noise altogether. If that is not possible, they should do all they can to control the noise at source, before considering redesigning the workplace, reorganising working patterns and taking measures to protect individual seafarer or workers. In this context shipowners and employers may wish to consider the following in the order shown:

- Use a different, quieter process or quieter equipment, e.g.:
  - consider whether the work be done in some other quieter way;
  - consider replacing whatever is causing the noise with something that is less noisy;
  - introduce a low-noise purchasing policy for machinery and equipment.
- Introduce engineering controls:
  - avoid metal-on-metal impacts, e.g. line chutes with abrasion resistant rubber, and reduce drop heights;
  - vibrating machine panels can be a source of noise - add material to reduce vibration ('damping');
  - isolate vibrating machinery or components from their surroundings, e.g. with anti-vibration mounts or flexible couplings;
  - fit silencers to air exhausts and blowing nozzles.
- Modify the paths by which the noise travels through the air to the people exposed, e.g;
  - erect enclosures around machines to reduce the amount of noise emitted into the workplace or environment;
  - use barriers and screens to block the direct path of sound;
  - position noise sources further away from seafarers and workers.
- Design and lay out the workplace for low noise emission, e.g;
  - segregate noisy machinery and processes from quieter areas;
  - design the workflow to keep noisy machinery out of areas where people spend most of their time.
- Limit the time spent in noisy areas - every halving of the time spent in a noisy area will reduce noise exposure by 3 dB (A).

Proper and regular maintenance of machinery and equipment is essential as it will deteriorate with age and can become noisier. Listen out for changes in noise levels - it may be time to replace worn or faulty parts.

#### **How to choose quieter equipment and machinery;**

5. Introducing a positive purchasing policy could be the single most cost effective long-term measure that a shipowner and employer can take to reduce noise at work. Choosing quieter equipment and machinery from the start can save the cost of introducing noise-reduction measures once it is installed, as well as removing or reducing the risk of litigation in respect of work induced hearing loss. Such a policy could include the following:

- Considering at an early stage the effect that new or replacement machinery will have on the existing noise levels in the workplace - setting a target to reduce the noise levels if possible.
- Ensuring the specification for all new machinery includes a realistic noise output level, and that tenderers and suppliers are aware of their legal duties.





- Asking the suppliers about noise levels under all operating conditions, as well as standard test conditions. Agreeing a common format for the data so you can compare information.
- Endeavouring to purchase only from suppliers who can demonstrate a low-noise design, with noise control as a standard part of the machine, not as a costly optional extra.
- Documenting the decision process, to help show that the legal duties to reduce workplace noise have been met.

Use of noise output data will only ever be a guide as many factors affect the noise levels experienced by seafarers and workers, but it will assist in the purchase of quieter machines.

### **Different Methods of Hearing Protection**

6. Hearing protection should be considered only as a last resort to control noise exposure.

It should be used either:

- as a short-term measure until other controls to reduce the noise exposure have been introduced; or
- where all reasonably practicable measures have been taken and a risk to hearing remains.

The main types of hearing protection are:

- earmuffs, which completely cover the ear - however the effectiveness of earmuffs may be reduced if the wearer is also wearing glasses;
- earplugs, which are inserted in the ear canal; and
- semi-inserts (also called 'canal caps'), which cover the entrance to the ear canal.

Ship owners and employers should use the results from their noise assessment and information from hearing protection suppliers to make the best choice of hearing protection.

It must

- reduce employees' noise exposure to below 85 dB(A);
- be suitable for the employees' working environment - consider comfort and hygiene; and
- be compatible with other protective equipment used by the employee (eg hard hats, dust mask and eye protection).

Wherever possible, seafarers and workers should be provided with a suitable range of effective hearing protection so they can choose the one that suits them best. Some employees may prefer a particular type or, may not be able to use some types of hearing protection because of the risk of ear infections.

### **Maintenance**

7. Shipowners and employers should ensure that hearing protection works effectively and check that:

- its overall condition is still good and it is clean;
- earmuff seals are undamaged;
- the tension of the headbands is not reduced;
- there are no unofficial modifications; and
- compressible earplugs are soft, pliable and clean.

### **Supervision**

8. Shipowners and employers should ensure that seafarers and workers use hearing protection when required to. In this context shipowners and employers may want to:

- include the need to wear hearing protection in their safety policy and put someone in authority in overall charge of issuing it and making sure replacement hearing protection is readily available;
- carry out spot checks to see that the rules are being followed and that hearing protection is being used properly. If employees persistently fail to use protectors properly you should follow your normal company disciplinary procedures; and



- ensure that all managers and supervisors set a good example and wear hearing protection at all times when in ear protection zones.

### **Information, instruction and training**

9. Where workers are likely to be exposed at or above any of the exposure limit values shipowners and employers are required to provide information, instruction and training including:

- the likely noise exposure and the risk to hearing this noise creates;
- where and how people can obtain hearing protectors;
- how to report defects in hearing protectors and noise control equipment;
- the worker's duties under the Noise Regulations;
- what the worker should do to minimise the risk, such as the proper way to use hearing protectors and other noise control equipment, how to look after them and store them, and where to use hearing protectors.

Shipowners and employers should make sure that this information is given in a way the worker can understand (for example it might be necessary to make special arrangements if the employee does not understand English or has only a limited knowledge of it).

### **Health effects of exposure to noise at work**

10. Hearing loss can be temporary or permanent. Temporary deafness is often experienced after leaving a noisy place. Although hearing recovers within a few hours, this should not be ignored. It is a sign that continued exposure to the noise could cause permanent damage. Permanent hearing damage can be caused immediately by sudden, extremely loud, explosive noises, e.g. from guns or cartridge-operated machines. But hearing loss is usually gradual due to prolonged exposure to noise. Tinnitus (ringing, whistling, buzzing or humming in the ears) may also occur. It should be borne in mind however that it is not just older persons who can have their hearing damaged by noise - Young persons are equally susceptible.

### **Health Surveillance**

11. Under the Noise Regulations workers exposed to noise levels that are, or could be, a risk to health must be provided with appropriate health surveillance.

The aim of health surveillance is to:

- warn shipowners and employers when workers might be suffering from early signs of hearing damage;
- give shipowners and employers an opportunity to take steps to reduce risk; and
- act as a means of checking that control measures are working.

Health surveillance usually means:

- regular hearing checks in controlled conditions to measure the sensitivity of hearing over a range of sound frequencies;
- informing employees about the results of their hearing checks;
- keeping records;
- encouraging workers to seek further advice from a doctor where hearing damage is suspected.

12. It is good practice for shipowners and employers to arrange regular hearing checks on all workers whose daily personal noise exposure exceeds the second action level, and to encourage them to attend their appointments. Analysis of the results of the health surveillance for groups of workers with different levels of noise exposure can provide an insight into how well the hearing conservation programme is working. The results should be used to target noise reduction, education and compliance practices more accurately. Such information should also be made available to workers and safety representatives.



### EXAMPLES OF TYPICAL dB(A) LEVELS

Examples of noise levels in different locations are given below in order to enable personnel to appreciate when and where a potentially harmful noise exposure may exist:

|             |   |
|-------------|---|
| 120 dB(A)   | 60 metres from a jet aircraft taking off. Between 2 running 1800 rpm diesel generators.                                     |
| 110 dB(A)   | 1 metre from a riveting machine. In a small ship engine room with 900 rpm diesel main engines and 1550 rpm diesel generator |
| 105 dB(A)   | 1 metre from cylinder tops of a slow speed (120 rpm) main diesel engine.  |
| 100 dB(A)   | Between 2 running diesel generators (600 rpm)   |
| 95 dB(A)    | In a slow speed (120 rpm) diesel main engine room at the after end on the floor plate level or in an open side flat.        |
| 90 dB(A)    | Noisy factory, machine shop, quieter parts of ships' engine rooms.  |
| 80 dB(A)    | 15 metres from a pneumatic drill.   |
| 70 dB(A)    | Noisy domestic machinery (vacuum cleaner at 3 metres).  |
| 60 dB(A)    | Inside large public building (e.g. supermarket).  |
| 50 dB(A)    | Inside a house in a suburban area during daytime.   |
| 40 dB(A)    | Quiet city area outdoors at night. Library whisper at 1 metre.  |
| 25-30 dB(A) | Countryside at night with no wind. Quiet church.  |
| 0           | Threshold of hearing of young persons of normal hearing.  |

These levels are only illustrative and noise levels can vary between similar locations. This is especially true of engine rooms as engine noise can vary considerably with the type of installation.



**DAILY EXPOSURE TO DIFFERENT SOUND LEVELS**

In the circumstances that occur on board ship, where personnel move from one place to another and the length of time spent in each place may vary, they may be exposed to different levels of noise throughout the day. The following figures give a guide to the acceptable maximum daily noise doses for unprotected ears, based on dB(A) sound energy received.

|                  |                  |            |                            |
|------------------|------------------|------------|----------------------------|
| <b>less than</b> | <b>80 dB(A)</b>  |            | <b>no limit (24 hours)</b> |
|                  | <b>82 dB(A)</b>  | <b>for</b> | <b>16 hours</b>            |
|                  | <b>85 dB(A)</b>  | <b>for</b> | <b>8 hours</b>             |
|                  | <b>90 dB(A)</b>  | <b>for</b> | <b>2 hours</b>             |
|                  | <b>95 dB(A)</b>  | <b>for</b> | <b>50 minutes</b>          |
|                  | <b>100 dB(A)</b> | <b>for</b> | <b>15 minutes</b>          |
|                  | <b>105 dB(A)</b> | <b>for</b> | <b>5 minutes</b>           |
|                  | <b>110 dB(A)</b> | <b>for</b> | <b>1 minute</b>            |

As an alternative illustration and equivalent to the above figures, the maximum daily noise dose for unprotected ears is halved for each increase of 3 dB(A).

**Recommended maximum limits for different areas on board ship**

**The limits below should be regarded as maximum levels, rather than desirable levels,** and as appropriate take account of the attenuation (noise reduction) that can be achieved with ear protectors.

| <b>Area</b>  | <b>Recommended Limit</b> |
|--|--------------------------|
| Machinery spaces – general                                       | 90 dB(A)                 |
| Machinery spaces – unmanned                                      | 110 dB(A)                |
| Machinery control rooms  | 75 dB(A)                 |
| Wheelhouse/bridge/chart room/radar room                          | 65 dB(A)                 |
| Bridge wings   | 70 dB(A)                 |
| Radio room/communications centre                                 | 60 dB(A)                 |
| Galleys, serveries, pantries                                     | 75 dB(A)                 |
| Normally unoccupied spaces                                       | 90 dB(A)                 |
| Sleeping cabins, Day cabins, hospital                            | 60 dB(A)                 |
| Offices, Conferences rooms etc                                   | 65 dB(A)                 |
| Mess rooms, recreation rooms recreation areas                    | 65 dB(A)                 |
| Open deck areas  | 75 dB(A)                 |
| Corridors, changing rooms, bathrooms, lockers and similar spaces | 80 dB(A)                 |
| Ship's whistle   | 110 dB(A)                |





**USE OF SAFETY SIGNS**

In any area of the ship where a worker is likely to be exposed to noise at or above an upper exposure action value the employer should ensure that the area is demarcated and identified by means of the ear protection sign, in accordance with the Merchant Shipping and Fishing Vessels (Safety Signs and Signals) Regulations 2001, as detailed below.

Sign with symbol: The background colour should be blue and the symbol should be white and placed centrally on the background. Blue should cover at least 50% of the area of the sign. The diameter should be 150 mm or 300 mm.

Supplementary sign: This should be rectangular. The background colour should be white with black letters or alternatively the background may be the same colour blue as the sign with the symbol and have white letters. The height of the letters should be a minimum of 20 mm.

|                            |  |
|----------------------------|--|
| <b>Sign with Symbol:</b>   |   |
| <b>Supplementary sign:</b> |  |

Further guidance in respect of the use of safety signs on merchant vessels is included in the Code of Safe Working Practices for Merchant Seafarers.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/maritime-health-and-safety-must-do-signs>



## PART 1

Daily Personal Noise Exposure Levels

1. The daily personal noise exposure level, **LEP,d**, which corresponds to **LEX,8h** defined in international standard ISO 1999: 1990 clause 3.6, is expressed in decibels and is ascertained using the formula:

$$L_{EP,d} = L_{Aeq,T_e} + 10 \log_{10} \left( \frac{T_e}{T_0} \right)$$

where—

$T_e$  is the duration of the person's working day, in seconds;

$T_0$  is 28,800 seconds (8 hours); and

$L_{Aeq,T_e}$  is the equivalent continuous A-weighted sound pressure level, as defined in ISO 1999: 1990 clause 3.5, in decibels, that represents the sound the person is exposed to during the working day.

2. If the work is such that the daily exposure consists of two or more periods with different sound levels, the daily personal noise exposure level ( $L_{EP,d}$ ) for the combination of periods is ascertained using the formula:

$$L_{EP,d} = 10 \log_{10} \left[ \frac{1}{T_0} \sum_{i=1}^n (T_i 10^{0.1(L_{Aeq,T_i})}) \right]$$

where—

$n$  is the number of individual periods in the working day;

$T_i$  is the duration of period  $i$ ;

$(L_{Aeq,T_i})$  is the equivalent continuous A-weighted sound pressure level that represents the sound the person is exposed to during period  $i$ ; and

$$\sum_{i=1}^{i=n} T_i$$

is equal to  $T_e$ , the duration of the person's working day, in seconds.





## PART 2

### Weekly Personal Noise Exposure Levels

1. The weekly personal noise exposure,  $L_{EP,w}$ , which corresponds to  $L_{EX,8h}$  defined in international standard ISO 1999: 1990 clause 3.6 (note 2) for a nominal week of five working days, is expressed in decibels and is ascertained using the formula:

$$L_{EP,w} = 10 \log_{10} \left[ \frac{1}{5} \sum_{i=1}^{i=m} 10^{0.1(L_{EP,d})_i} \right]$$

where—

$m$  is the number of working days on which the person is exposed to noise during a week; and

$(L_{EP,d})_i$  is the  $L_{EP,d}$  for working day  $i$ .

## PART 3

### Peak Sound Pressure Level

2. Peak sound pressure level,  $L_{Cpeak}$ , is expressed in decibels and is ascertained using the formula:

$$L_{Cpeak} = 20 \log_{10} \left[ \frac{P_{Cpeak}}{p_0} \right]$$

where—

$p_{Cpeak}$  is the maximum value of the C-weighted sound pressure, in Pascals (Pa), to which a person is exposed during the working day; and

$p_0$  is 20  $\mu$ Pa.

