

## **IIAC information note**

### **Noise Induced Hearing Loss due to**

**i) work involving blow mould extrusion of plastic, ii) the use of circular saws on natural stone or iii) the use of pneumatic percussive tools on concrete**

**February 2015**

Hearing Loss is common in the general population, especially as people age, and as a result it is difficult to establish a link between work in a particularly noisy job and the condition of noise-induced hearing loss (NIHL). The legal framework makes it clear that compensation through the Industrial Injuries Scheme should only be paid for a disease if a link to employment can be established or presumed with reasonable certainty. To make additions to the list of exposures eligible for Prescribed Disease (PD) A10 (occupational deafness; referred to as NIHL in modern scientific terms), the Council generally seeks evidence that workers have been exposed to noise levels over 98 dB(A), averaged over an 8-hour working day.

Recently the Council has received three requests to consider adding i) work involving blow mould extrusion of plastic, ii) the use of circular saws on natural stone and iii) the use of pneumatic percussive tools on concrete to the list of 'prescribed' occupations eligible to claim PD A10.

IIAC has sought evidence on noise exposure (to the extent of 98 dB(A), averaged over an 8-hour working day) in relation to these exposures by undertaking a search of the published peer-reviewed research literature and other relevant published information. It has also issued a call for evidence on its website and to members of the Society for Occupational Medicine, the Institution of Occupational Safety & Health and the British Occupational Hygiene Society. The Council also asked for data known to trade union officials, the Health and Safety Executive, the Occupational Surveillance Scheme for Audiological Physicians (OSSA)<sup>1</sup> and various industry experts.

It seems likely, historically, that noise levels have been high in these industries. However, no suitable noise exposure data were identified that could be tested against the criteria specified above. In the absence of such evidence, IIAC is unable to recommend that i) work involving blow mould extrusion of plastic, ii) the use of circular saws on natural stone or iii) the use of pneumatic percussive tools on concrete be added to the list of prescribed exposures for PD A10.

The Council will continue to monitor for evidence relating to these exposures and has issued a call for research to be undertaken to provide good quality noise exposure data about work involving blow mould extrusion of plastic, the use of circular saws on natural stone and the use of pneumatic percussive tools on concrete. Further evidence is always welcomed, especially historic evidence on exposure levels that have prevailed in these industries over time. To be usable, all data should be expressed in dB(A) and averaged over an 8-hour working day.

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<sup>1</sup> A part of the University of Manchester occupational health surveillance scheme

Details can be sent to the Council's Secretariat at any time (IIAC Secretariat, Caxton House, Tothill Street, London, SW1H 9NA. 0207 449 5618. [iiac@dwp.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:iiac@dwp.gsi.gov.uk)).