

SAFE WORK PRACTICES

EXCESSIVE NOISE *Page 1 of 2*

***This information does not take precedence over OH&S. All employees should be familiar with the Saskatchewan Employment Act and the OH&S Regulations.*

General: Where noise created by a work process may frequently exceed 80 decibels (dBA), steps must be taken to protect workers. (See OH&S Regulations, Part VIII).

1. **Estimating Noise Levels:** If it is not possible to carry on a normal conversation without raising the voice when standing at approximately arm's length, the noise level is probably greater than 80 dBA.

- A "buzzing" or "ringing" sensation in the ears or other part of the head after being exposed to the noise in question often indicates hearing loss may be developing.
- The ability to hear better in the morning than after work, or difficulty in hearing high pitched sounds or normal conversation in a slightly noisy background, may indicate that damage to the ear is occurring.

2. **Typical Noise Levels:**

- Rustle of leaves 20
- Quiet house 40
- Copier at 2 meters 50
- Normal conversation 60
- Students in a noisy classroom 80
- Loud lawnmower (at operator's level) 90
- Shout at 1.5 meters 100
- Pneumatic chipper (at operator's level) 120
- Jet plane 130-140
- Saturn rocket 190

3. **Adding Noise Levels:** Sometimes it may be necessary to determine the effect of adding one or more noise sources. **The result cannot be obtained by simply adding the individual noise levels.** If two noise sources, each producing 80 dB when operating separately, are operated at the same time, the resulting noise level will be 83 dB not 160 dB.

SAFE WORK PRACTICES

EXCESSIVE NOISE *Page 2 of 2*

4. **Measuring Noise Levels:** In every area where work is taking place and the noise level may frequently exceed 80 dBA:
 - Noise levels must be measured by a competent person in accordance with an approved process, and the measurements, evaluation and recommendations for corrective action must be documented.
 - When renovating the workplace, introducing new equipment or modifying a work process may affect the noise levels, re-measurement must be done and documented.
 - Warning signs indicating the level of noise must be posted where noise levels exceed 80 dBA.
5. **Reducing Noise Levels:** All reasonable means will be used to reduce excessive noise levels where required work is taking place. The means to reduce noise levels may include any of the following:
 - Eliminating or modifying the noise source.
 - Substituting quieter equipment or processes.
 - Enclosing the noise source.
 - Installing acoustical barriers or sound-absorbing materials.
6. **Hearing Protection:** Appropriate hearing protection must be used when working in areas where there is excessive noise.