

## NOISE LEVELS

The noise level in a workplace is considered harmful to health if it exceeds the exposure standard, which refers to an **average noise level of 85 decibels** (A-weighted) over an **eight-hour period**, and a **maximum of 140 decibels** (C-weighted).

As an indicator, some examples of noise levels include:

- jet engine – 130 decibels
- angle grinding – 120 decibels
- chain saw – 110 decibels
- lawn mowing – 90 decibels
- front end loader – 85 decibels
- freeway – 70 decibels
- normal conversation – 60 decibels

There is a chance that the exposure standard may be exceeded if:

- it is difficult to hear someone speaking to you from one metre away
- employees notice a temporary hearing loss or ringing in the ears after leaving work
- employees need to use hearing protectors.

Noise levels should be kept as low as reasonably practicable and should be considered before purchasing new plant and equipment – 'Buy Quiet'. Contact Risk, Health and Safety for advice.

## AUDIOMETRIC TESTING

If you provide hearing protectors to control your employees' noise exposure so it does not exceed the noise exposure standard, you must provide audiometric testing for those employees ('mandatory audiometric testing'). The effect of hearing protectors must not be taken into account in determining employees' exposure to noise.

If you are not sure if the standard is being exceeded, you must determine employees' exposure to noise. Risk, Health and Safety can measure noise levels in the workplace on request.

Risk, Health and Safety organise group on-site audiometric testing every two years (even numbered years).

**Warning – Uncontrolled when printed! The current version of this document is kept on the University website.**