**FQM LIMITED**

**XXX-OP-003**

**Noise Management**

1. **PURPOSE**

The purpose of this procedure is to outline responsibilities and provide guidance on the management and control of noise at all [COMPANY NAME] sites.

1. **SCOPE**

This procedure gives guidance to reduce noise exposure at [COMPANY NAME] sites to the lowest levels that are reasonably practicable. It also describes requirements and precautions to control exposure to noise emissions above action levels by other means. The content of this procedure reflects the recommendations and guidance contained in the Control of Noise at Work Regulations 2005.

1. **RESPONSIBILITIES**

* **HSE Manager/H&S Advisors** are responsible for:
  + Ensuring that this procedure is maintained and communicated to all relevant [COMPANY NAME] personnel.
  + Ensuring by means of induction, signage and information, that all employees, contractors and visitors are aware of noise prevention methods at all [COMPANY NAME] sites.
  + Being able to use noise measurement equipment and independently identify high noise areas on an operational site and employee exposure levels.
  + Understanding noise control measures.
  + Understanding the correct use of hearing protection.
  + Being able to effectively communicate findings and recommendations to employees and site management.
  + Delivering information on noise induced hearing loss, instruction on the types of hearing protection in use and the areas they should be used.
  + Ensuring noise assessments and records are made and kept.
  + Ensuring adequate information, instruction and training are provided to work personnel about hazards to hearing and how to reduce the risks.
  + Ensuring that mandatory hearing protection measures are correctly identified.
  + Providing advice and guidance to members of the workforce on the selection, use and maintenance of hearing protection.
  + The set-up of regular audiometry occupational health monitoring for all workshop based employees.
* **Operations Managers** are responsible for:
  + Via effective implementation of this procedure, managing the risks associated with noise in the workplace.
  + Ensuring that supervisory staff under their control are familiar with their duties described in this procedure.
  + Ensuring adequate hearing protection is provided.
* **Site Foremen/Chargehands** are responsible for:
* Ensuring hearing protection area signs are properly displayed and hearing protection is worn in designated areas.
* Ensuring adequate hearing protection is provided.
* **All employees** are required to:
* Comply with noise and hearing related notices and instructions.
* Use hearing protection and other protective equipment provided and report any defects to their Supervisor/ Foreman.

1. **DEFINITIONS**

**Competent Person**

* For measuring – the person who has the relevant skills, knowledge and experience to undertake measurements in your particular working environment.
* For audiometry - the person performing the tests should have appropriate training so that testing is carried out in a repeatable and accurate manner. An outside contractor will be sourced to carry out this testing on behalf of [COMPANY NAME].

**Noise**

Noise is unwanted sound, which in some circumstances is likely to be hazardous to health.

**Noise Induced Hearing Loss (NIHL)**

Degrees of deafness caused by exposure to high levels of noise. It is closely associated with prolonged exposure to higher noise levels found in the workplace.

1. **ARRANGEMENTS FOR NOISE REDUCTION AND CONTROL**
   1. **General Noise Reduction Philosophy**

To achieve and maintain the required controls, a planned noise reduction and management programme is implemented, using in house monitoring and consultants when appropriate to provide technical support and monitoring. [COMPANY NAME] will use these external consultants to support our own noise management to achieve satisfactory Noise Exposure Management System (NEMS).

* 1. **The planned programme of noise reduction and worker protection includes**
* Implementation and maintenance of the NEMS system.
* Initial, periodic and change of condition Noise Surveys and Assessments.
* Prevention and control.
* Addressing Exposure Action Levels and Limits.
* Information instruction and personnel training.
* Health surveillance.
* Workforce involvement.
* Records.
  1. **Noise Surveys and Assessments**

The Competent Person, or a competent supporting consultant, shall survey area noise levels. The information gathered forms an input to the [COMPANY NAME] task-based risk assessments. It is therefore required that noise level surveys are carried out on a regular basis.

The exposure of personnel to noise must be assessed and, by examining work patterns, estimates of daily noise exposures produced.

Before commencing any internal noise surveys or assessments ensure the noise meter has been tested in the previous year to ensure it still meets the required calibration standards.

* 1. **Risk Assessment, Prevention and Control**

The results of Noise Surveys are the primary information source for the preparation of suitable and sufficient risk assessments.

The risk assessment must consider:

* The level, type, and duration of noise exposure.
* The effects on employees particularly where there is a specific health risk.
* Any combined health and safety effects between noise and exposure to hazardous substances or vibration.
* Indirect effects from not being able to hear warning signals or other sounds which might otherwise reduce risks.
* Information from manufacturers of the equipment and availability of alternative and quieter equipment.
* Exposure to workplace noise beyond normal working hours or any exposure when using rest facilities.
* Information from health surveillance or whether it is required; the availability of PPE.
* PPE interface e.g. safety glasses and Ear protection cushions.

As with all risk assessments:

* The risk assessment must be reviewed regularly, and also whenever it is suspected as no-longer being valid (for example, if a worker has been injured by or due to noise at work) or when there has been a significant change in the work that it covers.
* Employees or their representatives must be consulted; and the significant findings and measures taken (the elimination or control of exposure, hearing protection, information, instruction, and training) must be recorded.

Where control fails to reduce noise or where cost benefit analysis shows it to be impracticable then appropriate hearing protection must be used.

* 1. **Creating a Planned Programme of Noise Control addressing exposure levels and limits.**

The Regulations define specific actions that are required at certain values. These relate to the levels of exposure to noise averaged over an 8 hour working day or week. They also relate to the maximum noise (peak sound pressure) to which workers are exposed in a working day. The regulation is subject to change, in such circumstances this procedure will be updated to reflect changes in regulation and controlled by the QHSE/HR Manager.

**The lower exposure action values are—**

(a) A daily or weekly personal noise exposure of 80 dB.

(b) A peak sound pressure of 135 dB.

**The upper exposure action values are—**

(a) A daily or weekly personal noise exposure of 85 dB.

(b) A peak sound pressure of 137 dB.

There are also levels of noise exposure that **must not be exceeded**. These exposure limit values are (measured after taking into account the effects of wearing hearing protectors).

(a) A daily or weekly personal noise exposure of 87 dB.

(b) A peak sound pressure of 140 dB.

Company policy is to require the wearing of appropriate hearing protection in the Fabrication workshops in all [COMPANY NAME] sites and at all times when operating equipment and machinery that will result in noise exposure level figures greater than those stated above.

Beyond controlling personnel exposure to below or within the values defined above, it is a requirement that actions are implemented to identify processes, equipment and/or working methods that will make the work quieter or mean that personnel are exposed for shorter times. If the improvements identified are reasonably practicable then they should be implemented.

If personnel have, or are likely to have exposure **above 83dbA then it becomes mandatory** that a Planned Programme of noise control is implemented.

In preparing a Planned Programme the following should be considered:

* Different/quieter approach.
* Low noise equipment/machinery purchasing policy.
* Work in a quieter way.
* Replace noisy equipment with a quieter unit.
* Engineering controls.
* Avoid metal to metal impacts, reduce drop heights, line surfaces.
* ‘Dampen’ vibrating panels and surfaces.
* Silencers for nozzles, exhausts, vents.
* Modify noise travel paths.
* Erect enclosures.
* Use barriers/ screens.
* Move noise sources away from personnel.
* Separation distances from noisy machinery.
* Modify workflow to separate machinery/ personnel.
* Limit the time spent in noisy areas.
  1. **Information, Instruction and Personnel Training**

This should include:

* Causes of noise induced hearing loss.
* Methods of prevention.
* Site arrangements, including information on Company use of NEMS.
* Inspection, fitting and maintenance of hearing protectors.
* Policy - where hearing protection is required.
* Understanding noise control measures.
* Understanding the correct use of hearing protection
  1. **Workforce Involvement**

Site Managers shall ensure that management of noise information relevant to the site is provided and is made available to all employees and site visitors, contractors etc.

* 1. **Records**

As part of our occupational health surveillance all [COMPANY NAME] employees will be subject to mandatory hearing tests that will be carried out and completed by our outside contractor. The records shall be retained via the outside contractor for at least 40 years from the date of last entry. It is good practice to offer individual employees a copy of their health record when they leave employment. The records should include:

* Identification details of the employee.
* The employee’s history of exposure to noise.
* The outcome of previous health surveillance in terms of fitness for work, and any restrictions required.

1. **REVIEW**

This procedure will be reviewed regularly, at a minimum on a yearly basis, at the annual management meeting. Additional review maybe required due to changes in legislation, operations, technology, personnel etc.