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01 Feb 2024	28 Feb 2026	SHEQ Warehouse (Pty) Ltd	Neville
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Noise Exposure Regulations, 2024

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1. Definitions

Key definitions include:

- "approved noise inspection authority" - inspection authority approved by Chief Inspector for monitoring noise in the workplace
- "Chief Director: Provincial Operations" - provincial director as defined in General Administrative Regulations, 2003
- "competent person: audiometric testing" means: (a) For screening audiometry: (i) Person registered under Health Professions Act, 1974 as: (aa) ENT specialist (bb) Speech therapist (cc) Audiologist; or (ii) Person with valid occupational skills certificate as Occupational Audiometric Screener (b) For diagnostic audiology, a person registered under Health Professions Act, 1974 as: (i) ENT specialist, or (ii) Audiologist
- "competent person" - person with knowledge, training, experience and qualifications in noise
- "exposure" - extent of exposure to noise as determined by risk assessment, including potential or accidental exposure
- "hearing protective device or HPD" - device with proven capability of reducing noise exposure below noise-rating limit or noise action level
- "impulse noise" - sound characterized by brief excursions of sound pressure exceeding background noise
- "LReq, 8h or 8-hour rating level" - rating level normalized to 8-hour working day (A-weighted)
- "Lpeak or peak noise level" - peak level of sound pressure wave with no time constant applied (C-weighted)
- "medical screening" - risk-based systematic medical assessment using medical history, physical examination and special tests
- "noise" - unwanted sound causing annoyance, speech interference or hearing impairment



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- "noise action level" - 8-hour rating level at/above 82 dBA for continuous noise and/or peak noise level at/above 135 dBC requiring specified actions
- "noise exposure monitoring" - systematic process of measuring magnitude, frequency and duration of noise exposure
- "noise-rating limit" - 8-hour rating level at/above 85 dBA for continuous noise and/or peak noise level at/above 137 dBC requiring specified actions
- "noise exposure risk assessment" - assessment and risk categorization of noise exposure in workplace
- "noise technical committee" - committee established under regulation 16
- "noise zone" - area where noise exposure is at/above noise-rating limit or noise action level with concomitant exposure to ototoxic agents and/or whole-body vibration
- "ototoxic chemical agent" - chemical agent potentially causing hearing impairment alone or with noise (even below 85 dBA)
- "the Act" - Occupational Health and Safety Act, 1993 (Act No. 85 of 1993)
- "vulnerable employee" - employee at higher risk of injury, disease or complications from noise exposure
- "whole-body vibration" - mechanical vibration transmitted into body through supporting surface during work activity

2. Scope of application

(1) These Regulations apply to: (a) Any employer or self-employed person at any workplace under their control, where persons are exposed to continuous or impulse noise at or above either: (i) The noise-rating limit, or (ii) The noise action level where there is concomitant exposure to ototoxic chemical agents and/or whole-body vibration (b) A designer, manufacturer, importer or supplier of plant or machinery for use at a workplace

(2) Regulation 4(6) applies to self-employed persons, but other provisions of regulations 4 and 9 do not.

(3) Where employer or self-employed person exposes any person to ototoxic chemical agents or whole-body vibration, the Hazardous Chemical Agents and Physical Agents Regulations shall apply.

3. Exposure to noise

(1) Subject to regulations 10 and 11, an employer or self-employed person must ensure that no person entering the workplace under their control will be exposed to noise at or above: (a) The noise-rating limit, or (b) The noise action level where there is concomitant exposure to ototoxic chemical agents and/or whole-body vibration

4. Information, instruction and training

(1) An employer who undertakes work that exposes an employee to noise must consult the relevant health and safety representative or committee and inform them of the intention to: (a)



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Conduct a noise exposure risk assessment (b) Conduct noise exposure monitoring (c) Provide training as contemplated in subregulation (4)

(2) An employer who undertakes work exposing employees to noise at/above the noise-rating limit or the noise action level with concomitant exposure to ototoxic agents/whole-body vibration must inform health and safety representatives/committee of the intention to conduct medical screening and surveillance.

(3) An employer must inform the relevant health and safety representative or committee of the documented outcomes of: (a) Noise exposure risk assessment (b) Noise exposure monitoring (c) Medical screening and surveillance

(4) Every employer undertaking work likely to expose employees to noise must ensure such employees are comprehensively informed, instructed and trained regarding: (a) Content and scope of these Regulations (b) Potential sources of noise exposure (c) Ototoxic chemical agents and whole-body vibration synergistically acting with noise (d) Potential risks to health and safety from noise exposure (e) Differing effects on men, women, young employees and vulnerable employees (f) Control measures to prevent exposure (g) Necessity for compliance with noise control measures, including inspection, use, care, maintenance, limitations and disposal of HPDs (h) Precautions to protect against exposure adverse effects (i) Reasons for and outcomes of risk assessment, monitoring and medical screening/surveillance (j) Noise action level and noise-rating limit for hearing conservation (k) Procedures for reporting defective noise control measures (l) Additional matters in regulations 5 and 9 (m) Process to access records

(5) The employer must ensure refresher training is conducted at least annually or more frequently as recommended by the health and safety committee or representative.

(6) An employer or self-employed person must ensure that mandataries or persons other than employees who may be affected by noise exposure are informed and trained in accordance with subregulation (4).

(7) The training program must be conducted by a competent person.

5. Duties of persons who may be exposed to noise

(1) Any person who is or may be exposed to noise at or above the noise-rating limit or the noise action level with concomitant exposure to ototoxic chemical agents/whole-body vibration must obey any lawful instruction regarding: (a) Use of noise control measures (b) Immediate reporting of defective noise control measures to the health and safety representative or employer (c) Use of HPDs (d) Prohibition on entering areas requiring HPDs unless authorized and wearing required HPDs (e) Co-operation in determining personal exposure, including wearing dosimeters (f) Reporting for medical screening and surveillance (g) Information, instruction and training received



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(2) An employee required to use HPDs must: (a) Inspect, use, wear, store and dispose of HPDs per instructions (b) Not intentionally misuse or damage HPDs (c) Immediately inform the employer of HPD damage, defects or cleaning/replacement needs

6. Duties of designers, manufacturers, importers and suppliers

(1) Any designer, manufacturer, importer or supplier must: (a) Ensure plant or machinery is designed and manufactured to minimize noise exposure risk when properly used (b) Supply plant or machinery that can be transported, received, stored and handled safely regarding noise exposure (c) Install plant or machinery to minimize noise exposure risk when properly used (d) Provide the employer or user with: (i) Noise and vibration emission data for plant or machinery (ii) Information, instruction and training needed to minimize noise exposure risk (iii) Information on appropriate maintenance for safe operation

7. Noise exposure risk assessment

(1) An employer or self-employed person must, for workplaces under their control, conduct a noise exposure risk assessment: (a) Before exposure to noise, as far as reasonably practicable (b) Thereafter at intervals not exceeding 24 months (c) Using a competent person

(2) When making the assessment, an employer or self-employed person must consider at least: (a) Noise sources to which persons may be exposed (b) Adverse health effects on men, women, young employees, vulnerable employees and others (c) Extent of potential exposure (d) Nature of the work process and potential control measure deterioration or failure (e) Previous noise exposure risk assessments, including: (i) Results of previous approved noise monitoring reports (ii) Outcomes of hearing loss trend analysis (f) Presence and extent of ototoxic chemical agent exposure (g) In case of whole-body vibration exposure, whether it exceeds the action level in Physical Agents Regulations

(3) An employer or self-employed person must, based on the risk assessment: (a) Consider recommendations identified by the competent person (b) Develop a documented action plan for implementing recommended interventions

(4) An employer or self-employed person must review the assessment if: (a) The assessment is no longer valid (b) Control measures are inefficient (c) Technological or scientific advances allow more efficient control methods (d) There are changes in: (i) Work methods (ii) Plant and machinery (iii) Type of work carried out (iv) Control measures (e) An incident occurred (f) Medical surveillance reveals an adverse health effect where noise exposure is a contributing factor

(5) The review must be carried out in accordance with subregulations (1)(c), (2) and (3).

8. Noise exposure monitoring



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(1) The employer or self-employed person must implement a noise exposure monitoring program where the risk assessment indicates that any employee may be exposed to noise at or above: (a) The noise-rating limit; or (b) The noise action level where there is concomitant exposure to ototoxic chemical agents and/or whole-body vibration

(2) The noise exposure monitoring program must: (a) Be carried out according to these Regulations (b) Be carried out by an approved noise inspection authority (c) Be representative of employee exposure to noise (d) Be carried out at least every 24 months (an inspector may direct re-monitoring)

(3) To be representative of employee exposure, the employer must ensure: (a) Area noise exposure monitoring is conducted per SANS 10083 when: (i) Multiple employees work in an area of approximately equal noise level (ii) An employee works at a fixed location relative to the noise source (b) Personal dosimetry monitoring is conducted per SANS 10083 for employees without fixed workplaces (c) Peak noise levels are monitored where the risk assessment determines potential exposure to impulse noise

(4) The employer or self-employed person must, based on the noise exposure monitoring report: (a) Consider recommendations identified by the approved noise inspection authority (b) Develop a documented action plan for implementing recommended interventions

9. Medical screening and medical surveillance

(1) The employer must establish a documented medical screening program: (a) Where any employee may be exposed to noise at or above the noise-rating limit or the noise action level with concomitant exposure to ototoxic agents/whole-body vibration; or (b) For vulnerable employees, after obtaining an occupational medicine practitioner's opinion

(2) Where medical screening is necessary, the occupational medicine practitioner must consider if: (a) An employee has a health condition making them vulnerable to noise (b) An employee has a health condition impacting proper HPD use (c) There is an identifiable occupational disease or adverse health effect related to noise (d) There is reasonable likelihood that the disease/effect may occur under particular exposure conditions (e) There are valid diagnostic techniques for the disease/effect

(3) Where medical screening is determined necessary, the occupational medicine practitioner must specify requirements including: (a) Evaluation of employee's medical, occupational and exposure history (b) Appropriate clinical examination and medical tests (c) Intervals for medical screening based on health risks and status

(4) The employer must ensure medical screening: (a) Is carried out by an occupational health practitioner (b) Includes: (i) Initial medical screening before employment (when reasonably practicable) (ii) Periodic medical screening at intervals recommended by the occupational medicine practitioner (not exceeding 24 months)

(5) After screening, the occupational health practitioner must inform the employer in writing of the outcome if it was normal.



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(6) The employer must implement audiometry for: (a) Any employee exposed to noise at/above the noise-rating limit or noise action level with concomitant exposure to ototoxic agents/whole-body vibration; or (b) Vulnerable employees

(7) Audiometry must be: (a) Conducted according to the Code of Practice for Audiometry (b) Conducted by a competent person for audiometric testing

(8) The occupational medicine practitioner must notify the employer in writing via a medical certificate of fitness, and inform the employee, if: (a) An employee has a medical condition that: (i) Prevents wearing hearing protective devices (ii) Is likely to be aggravated by workplace exposures; or (b) Screening identifies an adverse health effect caused by workplace noise exposure

(9) The employer must ensure an exit medical screening is done by an occupational health practitioner when employment ends. A medical screening within 6 months prior to termination fulfills this requirement.

(10) The medical certificate of fitness must indicate: (a) Recommendations on employee's fitness to perform job requirements (b) Presence of occupational disease (without confidential medical information) (c) Any duty restrictions or conditions (d) Duration of restrictions/conditions

(11) The employer must, as far as reasonably practicable: (a) Accommodate recommended conditions or restrictions (b) Only permit employees certified for restricted duties to return to normal duties if certified fit by an occupational medicine practitioner

(12) The employer must establish, implement and maintain a documented medical surveillance system where medical screening has been determined necessary.

(13) Medical surveillance must be: (a) Overseen by an occupational medicine practitioner (b) At minimum: (i) Include screening results analysis over time (ii) Identify need for targeted exposure prevention based on results

(14) The employer must ensure employees provide written informed consent for: (a) Medical screening (b) Medical surveillance program

(15) An employee may appeal findings in a medical certificate of fitness to the Chief Inspector within 60 days of receiving the certificate.

10. Prevention or control of exposure to noise

(1) An employer or self-employed person must ensure exposure to noise is eliminated where reasonably practicable.

(2) Where elimination is not reasonably practicable, the employer or self-employed person must reduce noise exposure to levels below the limits in regulation 2(1)(a) by implementing a combination of hierarchy of noise control measures, including: (a) Engineering control



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measures to eliminate or reduce noise at its source or modify transmission routes (b) Maintaining noise-generating plant and machinery in good working order (c) Administrative control measures to limit number of persons exposed and duration of exposure

(3) The employer must ensure employees exposed to noise receive information, instruction and training on inspection, correct use, maintenance and control measure limitations, and reporting of failures.

11. Noise zone

(1) The employer or self-employed person must ensure that any workplace or part thereof is designated and clearly demarcated as a noise zone where the noise level is at or above: (a) The noise-rating limit; or (b) The noise action level, with concomitant exposure to: (i) Ototoxic chemical agents; and/or (ii) Whole-body vibration exceeding the action level in Physical Agents Regulations

(2) The employer or self-employed person must designate and clearly demarcate any plant and machinery without a fixed location as a noise zone where the noise level is at or above the limits in subregulation (1)(a) or (b).

(3) The employer must not allow any person to enter or remain in a noise zone unless effective HPDs are worn correctly.

12. Hearing protective devices

(1) Where exposure to noise cannot reasonably be eliminated or controlled, the employer must provide suitable HPDs.

(2) Where HPDs are provided, an employer must ensure that HPDs: (a) Reduce exposure to below: (i) The noise-rating limit; or (ii) The noise action level with concomitant exposure to ototoxic chemical agents and/or whole-body vibration (b) Are correctly selected, fitted and properly used, considering: (i) Noise nature and characteristics (ii) Work type (iii) Physical effort required (iv) Wearing duration (v) Visibility, comfort and communication requirements (vi) Compatibility with other PPE (vii) Occupational health practitioner recommendations (c) Are kept in good condition and efficient working order (d) Are readily available to exposed persons

(3) The employer must: (a) Ensure reusable HPDs are kept in hygienic condition and efficient working order (b) Provide separate containers or storage facilities for HPDs when not in use (c) Ensure HPDs not in use are stored only in designated places

(4) Subregulations (1), (2) and (3) also apply to persons other than employees who may be exposed to noise.

13. Maintenance of control measures



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(1) Every employer or self-employed person must ensure that any control measure contemplated in regulation 10: (a) Is fully and properly used (b) Maintained in efficient state and good working order (c) Is in good repair and clean condition

14. Records

(1) The employer or self-employed person must: (a) Keep records of: (i) Training (ii) Noise exposure risk assessment and action plan (iii) Noise exposure monitoring and action plan (iv) Medical screening and surveillance records (v) Maintenance of control measures (b) Keep records for 40 years (c) Make available: (i) Records from regulations 4, 7, 8 and 13 to inspectors and health and safety representatives/committees (ii) Records from regulation 9 to any person with employee's formal written consent

(2) If the employer or self-employed person ceases activities, they must inform the relevant Chief Director: Provincial Operations of: (a) Where records shall be kept (b) How those records shall be accessed when required

15. Code of practice

(1) The Chief Inspector may, in consultation with the Noise Technical Committee, develop or review approved codes of practice to guide and regulate noise exposure in the workplace.

16. Noise technical committee

(1) The Council may, after consulting with the Minister, establish a noise technical committee consisting of: (a) A chairperson designated by the Chief Inspector from Department of Employment and Labour employees (b) One person designated by the Chief Inspector from the Department (c) Three persons designated by employers' organizations to represent employers (d) Three persons designated by employees' organizations to represent federation of unions (e) Two persons representing professional bodies recognized by the Chief Inspector (f) One person representing a higher educational institution (g) One person representing audiology (h) One person representing occupational medicine (i) Persons who are competent in noise matters co-opted by the committee with Council authorization

(2) The Council must: (a) Appoint members for periods determined at appointment time (b) After affording reasonable opportunity to respond, discharge members for fair and just reasons (c) Appoint new members to replace discharged members

(3) The noise technical committee must: (a) Advise the Council on noise related matters, including codes, standards and training (b) Make recommendations and submit reports regarding matters to which these Regulations apply (c) Advise the Council on matters referred to it (d) Perform administrative functions requested by the Council (e) Conduct work according to Council instructions and rules (f) Advise the Chief Inspector regarding appeals against medical certificate of fitness findings



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17. Offences and penalties

Any person contravening regulations 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14 or 15 is guilty of an offense and liable on conviction to a fine or imprisonment up to 12 months. For continuous offenses, additional fines of R200 per day or additional imprisonment of one day per day (not exceeding 90 days) may apply.

18. Repeal of regulations

The Noise-Induced Hearing Loss Regulations, 2003, published as Government Notice No. R. 307 of 7 March 2003, will be repealed 18 months after promulgation of the Noise Exposure Regulations.

19. Short title

These Regulations are called the Noise Exposure Regulations, 2024.