## Reviewing noisy environments in schools

Some school staff may be at higher risk of exposure to excessive noise than others. These groups include industrial technology and design teachers and teacher aides, music staff, schools officers, agricultural assistants and cleaners. The following checklist can be used to discuss and identify noise exposure issues with staff.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>YES</th>
<th>NO</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Do you work in a noisy environment?</td>
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<td>e.g. music rooms, manual arts block (not just with powered equipment, also with hand tools such as hammers and mallets impacting on a metal surface).</td>
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<tr>
<td>Do you work with noisy equipment?</td>
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<td>e.g. table saws, thicknessers, power tools, leaf blowers, backpack vacuum cleaners, mowing equipment, tractors, musical instruments.</td>
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<td>Is it difficult to hear someone speaking to you from an arm’s length or about 1m away?</td>
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<td>e.g. do you often have to strain to catch what people are saying because of background noise from music practice, machinery operating etc.?</td>
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</table>

**If you answered ‘yes’ to any of these questions please continue with the questionnaire below.**

- Is unnecessary noise being emitted from machinery or equipment because it is not working properly or is poorly maintained?
- Are air compressors located in a separate enclosure to reduce noise levels?
- Approximately how long do you spend each day/week in these noisy environments?
- Is hearing protection provided? e.g. earmuffs or earplugs
- Have you been shown how to use the hearing protection?

Hearing protection only works when it is worn, is the right type and is well maintained. It is important to manage it properly to ensure maximum protection.

- Are your earmuffs/earplugs replaced immediately if they are damaged?
  - are the cushions on your earmuffs replaced as soon as they begin to harden or crack?
  - are your earmuffs replaced if the outside cups are indented, cracked or damaged?
- Are your earmuffs stored away from direct sunlight when not in use, so the band can doesn’t become distorted when exposed to heat and humidity?
- Are the bands of earmuffs stored or stretched over equipment when not in use? (this affects their fit)
- Are earmuffs wiped clean with wipes or cleaned with soap and water?
- Are signs displayed indicating that personal hearing protectors should be worn?

Name/work area ………………………………………………………………………………………….
Comments ………………………………………………………………………………………………………...…….

Further information on Noise is available from the [Creating Healthier Workplaces website](https://www.workcover.qld.gov.au/).