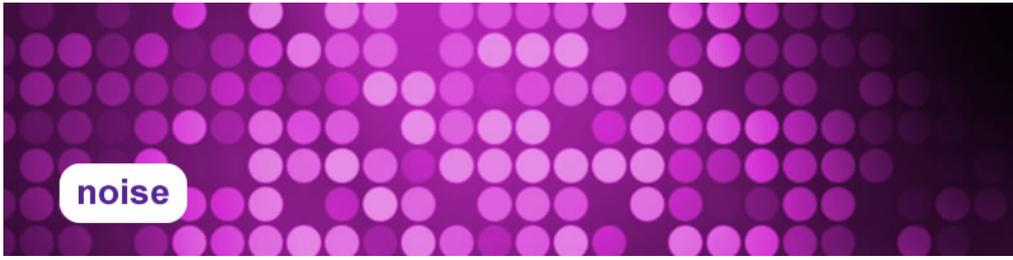


## 16. Noise



Event organisers need to consider the levels of noise at events not only from the point-of-view of causing a disturbance but also with regard to the damage it can do.

There are regulations governing the risks to those working on an event site from excessive noise which may require organisers to provide hearing protection in some circumstances.

While the regulations do not specifically apply to audiences or to the public, they do place a duty on employers and the self-employed to ensure that – so far as is reasonably practicable – people other than themselves and their employees are not exposed to health and safety risks, which includes damage to hearing.

Event organisers should also bear in mind there are civil law liabilities relating to negligence.

It should always be assumed that if a structure is to be built using power tools or amplified music is going to be used, some kind of action may be needed to control noise levels.

Although the regulations covering noise levels apply to employees, there are no specific legislative limits to the levels of noise audiences can be exposed to. Nevertheless, event organisers do have a responsibility to protect the public from damage to their hearing.

The average sound level for an event (the entire audience area) is measured as an Leq dB and it is recommended that this should not exceed 107 dB(A) and the peak sound pressure level should not exceed 140 dB. In practical terms, the Leq can rarely be measured for the entire duration of an event and it is suggested that an Leq, 1 minute of 109 or 110 dBA is used as a surrogate (the choice being dependant upon the duration of the event and the gaps between performances.)

When considering the audience, factors such as overall noise level, speaker separation distances and the provision of quiet periods should be considered.

Where practicable, the audience should not be allowed within 3 metres of any loudspeaker of any significant size. Where this is not possible, measurements should be used to ensure that sound levels are kept to an acceptable level within this area as set out above. However, under no circumstances should people be allowed within 1 metre of such loudspeakers.

Where noise levels are likely to be high, organisers should consider warning the audience of this.

With regard to community impact of noise from events, many local authorities will have recommended noise control procedures for minimising noise in surrounding areas.

It should also be noted that some fixed venues may have a specific noise policy which restricts noise levels.

*Note: For guidance on the control of environmental music noise and its impact on communities neighbouring events see the 'Noise Council Code of Practice on environmental noise at concerts, 1995 ISBN 0900103515. This can be found at [www.cieh.org](http://www.cieh.org) ([http://www.cieh.org/uploadedFiles/Core/Policy/Publications\\_and\\_information\\_services/Policy\\_publications/Publications/Noise%20Council%20Code%20on%20Noise%20Control%20](http://www.cieh.org/uploadedFiles/Core/Policy/Publications_and_information_services/Policy_publications/Publications/Noise%20Council%20Code%20on%20Noise%20Control%20)*

*Detailed guidance on noise in entertainment is available in the HSE publication HSG 260 'Sound advice: Control of noise at work in music and entertainment' and the associated HSE web pages at [www.soundadvice.info](http://www.soundadvice.info) (<http://www.soundadvice.info>).*

*More detailed information about the above can be found in the Purple Guide at [www.thepurpleguide.co.uk](http://www.thepurpleguide.co.uk) (<http://www.thepurpleguide.co.uk>)*