

M6-EN.6 NOISE

M6-EN.6.1 Brief Description

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The material that follows is supplementary to the information provided in the Introductory Module (section M0-EN.5).

In case of exposure to excessive noise, noise levels have to be reduced or controlled or ear protection provided for workers has to be used.

Workers in vehicle repair workshops are exposed to excessive noise during different operations. For example:

- Operators using air saws and chisels may be exposed to noise levels as high as 107 dB, while those using air grinders and orbital sanders to 97 dB
- Noise levels from panel beating and other repair operations using hand tools are variable but generally high
- Noise from work with sheet metal is often around 93 dB, while welding and flame cutting can also be noisy
- Noise during paint spraying has been measured at 93 dB
- Much body repair work will expose operators and others to more than 85 dB
- Removing panels using an air saw for as little as six minutes can mean that the user's total daily personal noise exposure will exceed 85 dB
- Using an air sander for 45 minutes can give the user a daily personal noise exposure of more than 90 dB

The noise action levels (of 85 and 87 dB) are likely to be exceeded where bodywork is a regular daily activity and where pneumatic tools are used even for short periods.

Safety Precautions

Reduction of noise exposure by means other than the provision of hearing protection is preferable, when this is practicable. Therefore, employers must:

- Choose quiet machines and equipment, by requiring from the suppliers to provide information on noise levels at operators' positions
- Use silencers, for example on pneumatic exhausts
- Isolate the bodywork in separate room or fix ceiling high partitions, covered with noise absorbing material
- Fit sound absorbing materials to work areas
- Reduce the duration of exposure to noise by job rotation
- Identify noisy work with "ear protection zone" warning signs
- Impose the use of hearing protection within the "ear protection zones"