Safety Notice – Signage of Noisy Plant and Equipment

This notice applies to any workplace at UQ where noise levels over 80 dB(A) may occur and includes plant rooms, maintenance workshops, and research and teaching laboratories. It applies to all workers exposed to noise, as well as their supervisors and managers.

The Safe Work Australia Managing Noise and Preventing Hearing Loss at Work – Code of Practice September 2015, has recently lowered the no hearing loss effect for noise to 75 dB(A) (8 hour equivalent noise dose) or 130 dB(C) for instantaneous peak noise, occurring anytime during the work day. The present occupational noise exposure standards remain unchanged at 85 dB(A) and 140 dB(C) respectively. The revised values indicate that long-term noise exposure well below the current occupational standards can contribute to hearing loss, especially in susceptible individuals. This safety notice details actions workers and supervisors should take to minimise the risk of hazardous noise.

Remember it is about your 8 hour total!

UQ recommends all workers must wear Hearing Protection Equipment (HPE) for all noise levels over 80 dB(A) irrespective of the likely duration of exposure. Most UQ workers exposed to noise are exposed to short exposures occurring multiple times during the day, it is important HPE is worn for all noisy tasks over 80 dB(A) to ensure workers daily noise is minimised, ideally below the revised ‘no-effect’ levels. Workers are focussed on getting their job done, not on calculating their daily noise exposure. Discretionary choices are great, but make it easy for them to know when they need to wear HPE by ensuring:

**SIGNAGE**
- **Plant Rooms** - place signage at all entrances that clearly shows the noise hazard and the need to wear HPE. Signage is available from industrial supply shops, examples of suitable signage are shown in this document.
- **Operation of fixed, fabrication equipment** - place signage on or close to the equipment, where the operator can easily see it. Note: An SOP near the equipment that mentions HPE does not meet this requirement.

**HPE ACCESS**
- **Ensure** HPE is available in plant rooms, where workers called there un-expectantly, without their regular HPE can access it.

**AWARENESS**
- **Inform** workers of the importance of wearing HPE and correct fitting of HPE.
- **Ensure** adequate supervision and compliance.
- **Enrol** workers in the hearing conservation program to help identify early signs of hearing loss.

For further information about hearing conservation at UQ, refer to the PPL 2.60.04. If you are unsure about noise levels of equipment in your work area or accumulating a significant daily noise dose, please contact an occupational hygiene advisor at the UQ OHS Division for further advice.

**Contact for Additional Information**

For further information, contact your local Work Health and Safety Manager/Coordinator, or the UQ OHS Division:
- **Phone:** +61 7 336 52365
- **Email:** ohs@uq.edu.au