

Directive 2003/10/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 6 February 2003 on the minimum health and safety requirements regarding the exposure of workers to the risks arising from physical agents (noise) (Seventeenth individual Directive within the meaning of Article 16(1) of Directive 89/391/EEC)

SECTION I

GENERAL PROVISIONS

Article 1

Aim and scope

- 1 This Directive, which is the 17th individual Directive within the meaning of Article 16(1) of Directive 89/391/EEC, lays down minimum requirements for the protection of workers from risks to their health and safety arising or likely to arise from exposure to noise and in particular the risk to hearing.
- 2 The requirements of this Directive shall apply to activities in which workers are or are likely to be exposed to risks from noise as a result of their work.
- 3 Directive 89/391/EEC shall apply fully to the whole area referred to in paragraph 1, without prejudice to more stringent and/or specific provisions contained in this Directive.

Article 2

Definitions

For the purposes of this Directive, the physical parameters used as risk predictors are defined as follows:

- (a) peak sound pressure (p_{peak}): maximum value of the 'C'-frequency weighted instantaneous noise pressure;
- (b) daily noise exposure level ($L_{\text{EX},8\text{h}}$) (dB(A) re. 20 μPa): time-weighted average of the noise exposure levels for a nominal eight-hour working day as defined by international standard ISO 1999: 1990, point 3.6. It covers all noises present at work, including impulsive noise;
- (c) weekly noise exposure level ($L_{\text{EX},8\text{h}}$): time-weighted average of the daily noise exposure levels for a nominal week of five eight-hour working days as defined by international standard ISO 1999:1990, point 3.6 (note 2).

Article 3

Exposure limit values and exposure action values

- 1 For the purposes of this Directive the exposure limit values and exposure action values in respect of the daily noise exposure levels and peak sound pressure are fixed at:
 - a exposure limit values: $L_{\text{EX},8\text{h}} = 87$ dB(A) and $p_{\text{peak}} = 200$ Pa⁽¹⁾ respectively;

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- b upper exposure action values: $L_{EX,8h}$ 85 dB(A) and $p_{peak} = 140 \text{ Pa}^{(2)}$ respectively;
- c lower exposure action values: $L_{EX,8h} = 80 \text{ dB(A)}$ and $p_{peak} = 112 \text{ Pa}^{(3)}$ respectively.

2 When applying the exposure limit values, the determination of the worker's effective exposure shall take account of the attenuation provided by the individual hearing protectors worn by the worker. The exposure action values shall not take account of the effect of any such protectors.

3 In duly justified circumstances, for activities where daily noise exposure varies markedly from one working day to the next, Member States may, for the purposes of applying the exposure limit values and the exposure action values, use the weekly noise exposure level in place of the daily noise exposure level to assess the levels of noise to which workers are exposed, on condition that:

- a the weekly noise exposure level as shown by adequate monitoring does not exceed the exposure limit value of 87 dB(A); and
- b appropriate measures are taken in order to reduce the risk associated with these activities to a minimum.

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- (1) 140 dB (C) in relation to 20 μ Pa.
- (2) 137 dB (C) in relation to 20 μ Pa.
- (3) 135 dB (C) in relation to 20 μ Pa.