



Noise from Public Events

Public events such as concerts or vehicle races can be very loud and cause symptoms ranging from irritability and ringing in the ears to hearing loss and effects on concentration. The severity of these impacts varies between people and can depend on the volume, intensity and duration of the noise and any pre-existing conditions a person might have.

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What is noise?

Noise is any unwanted or harmful sound. Very loud events such as concerts, music festivals and vehicle races can cause symptoms in people depending on the proximity, volume, source, intensity, duration and time of day.

How does noise affect people?

Signs that noise may be harmful include having to shout to be heard, or if sounds seem muffled afterwards. Since noise perception varies between individuals, immediate effects are experienced differently from person to person.

Immediate effects of noise exposure may include:

- stress
- speech interference
- irritability
- discomfort
- reduced attention span
- elevated blood pressure
- sleep or work disturbance.

Long term noise exposure may result in:

- tinnitus (ringing in the ears)
- hearing loss
- reduced ability to think, concentrate, reason or remember.

Noise is recorded in decibel units (dB). SafeWork NSW states exposure to noise above 85 decibels (dB) when averaged over 8 hours increases the risk of permanent hearing loss. Every 3dB increase after this doubles the risk of hearing loss. Figure 1 provides some common noise levels and their impact on human health.

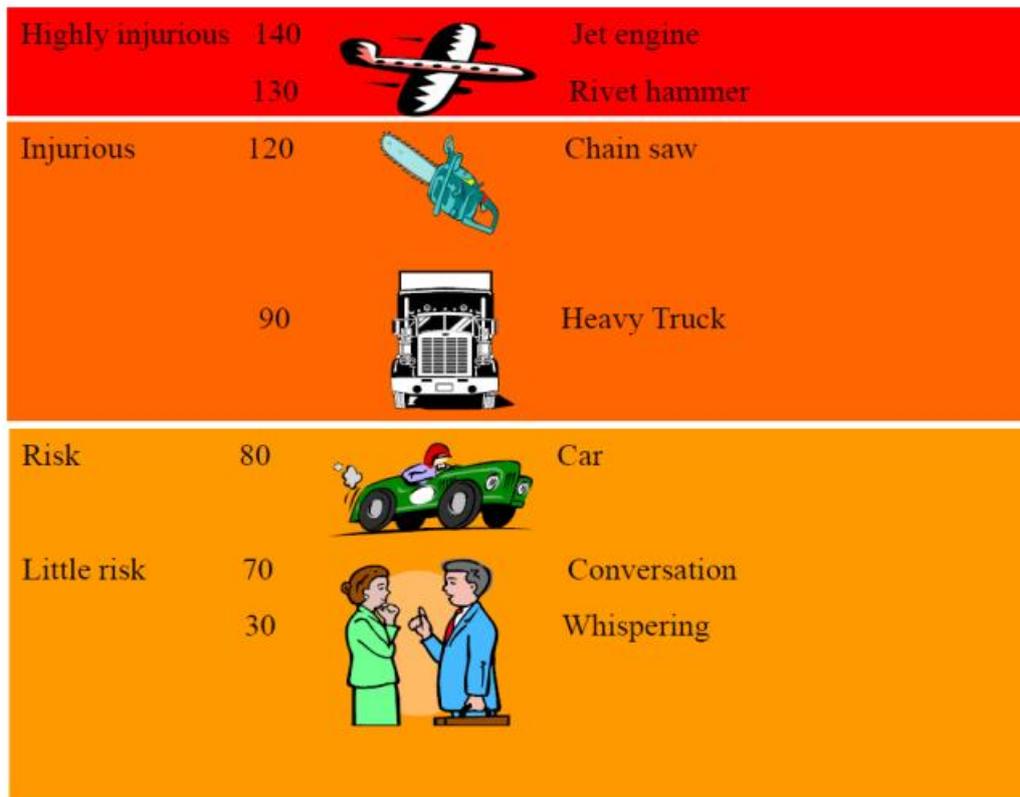


Figure 1: Common noise levels and effects on human health [Source: International Labour Organisation](#)

Who is at risk?

Some individuals are at increased risk of negative effects, including:

- people in hospitals or rehabilitating at home
- people dealing with complex mental tasks
- those who have visual or hearing impairment
- babies and children
- elderly.

How do I reduce the health impacts of event noise?

When attending events you can:

- wear personal hearing protection such as ear plugs and ear muffs
- distance yourself from the direct source of noise if possible.

If living nearby you can:

- keep doors and windows closed to create a barrier to the noise
- stay indoors
- wear personal hearing protection such as ear plugs and ear muffs
- travel away while the event it is in session.

What regulations are there against noise in NSW?

In NSW, there are regulations to manage noise from events. Regulatory agencies require noisy events to conclude by the time specified in their Licence Agreement and must have noise management plans to reduce noise directed at homes.

The regulating agency responsible for controlling noise varies between different types of events. Appropriate regulatory authorities can include:

- local councils
- NSW Environment Protection Authority (EPA) - for most scheduled activities
- Olympic Park Authority – for events held at Olympic Park, Sydney
- Destination NSW – for some motor vehicle events (Supercars).

These regulatory agencies may be able to issue Prevention Notices, Noise Control Notices and Compliance Cost Notices to event organisers that do not comply with noise standards.

Contact the event organiser for further information on noise management and regulation.

More information about noise-related regulation is available from [NSW EPA](#) and [SafeWork NSW](#).

Who can I contact?

If you are concerned about a loud event contact:

- your Local Council
- [EPA NSW](#)
- organiser of event.

For health-based noise advice contact [Your local Public Health Unit](#)