**TOOLBOX TALK NOISE POLLUTION**

Excessive noise levels on site represent a major hazard to site workers and can annoy neighbours. Noise causes more off-site complaints than any other topic and can rapidly sour relations. Noise can also disturb our wildlife and natural heritage. It is not only loud noises that cause complaint, but also anti-social activity and irregular or tonal noises such as reversing sirens. Other complaints include shouting, swearing, radios and out of hours deliveries. Some construction activities that cause the greatest problems are; pneumatic tools, petrol driven saws, traffic. Therefore we must have in place a plan to avoid excessive noise levels emitting from our work activities:

* Reduce the need for noisy assembly practices e.g. fabricate off site.
* Keep noisy plant as far away from public areas as possible.
* Turn off all vehicles and plant when not in use.
* Screen noisy areas off. (see below)
* Fit generators and plant with silencers/mufflers.
* Maintain plant and equipment properly to avoid rattles and squeaks.
* Electrically operated plant is quieter than diesel or petrol driven plant.
* Adopt working hours to restrict noisy activities to certain periods of the day.
* If you receive a complaint from the public be diplomatic and report it to site management.
* If an Environmental Health officer approaches you, be co-operative and take them to see the site management.

### SCREENING

Noise will generally radiate in all directions from a construction noise source, and will bend around and over walls and buildings. It will also reflect back off solid surfaces. Some plant and activities generate more noise in one direction than another, so careful siting of the source can pay dividends. Screening between the source and the receiver is effective if it obscures the direct line of sight between the two.

If designed and used correctly screens can reduce noise levels from a site considerably and at relatively very low cost. Factors affecting the efficiency of a screen include: distance from source and the receiver of noise, density of the material used, height and length of the screen (12mm thick ply minimum). The higher a screen is, the more effective it is. A screen that is placed near to either the noise source or receptor is more effective than one placed in the middle of the two.

**CONTROL MEASURES**

Noise may be controlled by:

**Engineering**:

Purchase equipment, which has low vibration and noise characteristics, achieving design solutions to noise problems including using quieter processes, operate rotating and reciprocating equipment as slow as practicable.

**Orientation and Location**:

Moving the noise source away from the work area, or turning the machine around.

**Enclosure:**

Surround the machine or other noise source with sound-absorbing material, the effect is limited unless total enclosure is achieved.

**Use of Silencers:**

This can suppress noise generated when air, gas or steam flow in pipes or are exhausted to atmosphere.

**Lagging:**

Can be used on pipes carrying steam or hot fluids as an alternative to enclosure.

**Damping:**

Can be achieved by fitting proprietary damping pads, stiffening ribs or by using double skin construction techniques.