



TITLE OF RESEARCH: A Risk Assessment of employee noise exposure in nightclubs in Ireland.

RESEARCHER: The research is being carried out by full-time research masters student Aoife Kelly, in the School of Food Science and Environmental Health, Cathal Brugha Street, Dublin Institute of Technology. This study will form part of a master's research thesis.

Introduction

In 2006, the occupational noise legislation in Ireland was changed and the maximum occupational noise level experienced by employees was reduced. The new regulations were not applicable in the entertainment sector until 15th February 2008 due to a number of factors. One main factor is that working conditions in the entertainment industry differ from other industries, as loud sounds are often a by-product from heavy industry but, with nightclubs, it is the desired effect. Hence the challenge is to protect workers, musicians, security personnel, disc jockeys and patrons while still delivering the experience the patrons expect.

At present there are no current guidelines for the Irish nightclub sector outlining effective controls to ensure compliance with the occupational noise levels set by revised legislation. The aim of this research is to produce nightclub guidelines on effective measures by which the noise level may be reduced without reducing in the enjoyment or desired experience for the patrons.

Would you be interested in availing of a free noise risk assessment, if so, I am looking for interested managers / premises to participate in the research. Please feel free to contact me, Aoife Kelly by email on aoifek84@yahoo.co.uk or on 01 814 6086 or 085 7230 653.

Benefits of Research

Participating in this research may offer the following benefits to your premises;

- An indication of the level of compliance to Noise Control in Chapter 1 Part 5, of the Safety, Health and Welfare at Work (General Application) Regulations 2007. Noise levels in the nightclub will be measured using a Sound Level Meter –this will be conducted **free of charge**.
- There is no need for you to purchase expensive noise equipment to record if your employees are exposed to noise levels in excess of 87dB (A) as this research will involve the conducting of a noise risk assessment **specific for your premises**.
- **Anonymous simple non-intrusive** risk assessment shall be carried out within one day. The noise risk assessment involves 2 hours of noise measurement on bar staff, completion of a short questionnaire by both managers and employees and short walk about prior to nightclub beginning operation to record the size of the dance-floor and location of speakers.
- **Report** issued following risk assessment with **easy to understand guidance** on the requirements of the noise legislation and suggested control measures to reduce noise levels experienced by employees.



- Chance for you to **express your opinions** on the noise legislation and put forward your suggestions on how to reduce noise exposure of employees.

Requirements of Research

Nightclub managers are asked to participate in the study on a voluntary basis. Managers will be requested to complete a consent form to allow noise monitoring within the premises. Staff will be requested to complete a consent form for involvement in basic screening hearing testing and personal noise dosimeter.

(i) Design Features of Nightclub Recorded:

If you enter into this study the researcher will need to visit your nightclub premises before it is open to the public in order to observe and record the dimensions of the nightclub, specific dimensions of the bar area and dance-floor, number of speakers and their locations, type of sound system used, presence of sound limiters and acoustic absorption materials used. This visit should last no longer than one hour.

(ii) Nightclub Noise Exposure:

If you enter into this study, you will be required to allow ambient noise monitoring to take place in your nightclub premises once at least between the hours of 11pm-1am. This monitoring carried out using a hand-held sound level meter which is placed in the largest bar area of your nightclub. This sound level meter will be out of view of customers and a small extension cable shall be placed on a shelf behind your bar from 11-1am. In addition you will be required to allow the researcher to approach a consenting nightclub employee to wear a light-weight personal noise meter which records the level of noise they are exposed to during their work shift in the nightclub. This noise meter will be attached to their collar and will be kept out of sight as it is attached to the waist-band of the back of the employee. They will be given a demonstration on how to attach the noise meter before they attach it to their own collar.

(iii) Questionnaires:

If you enter into this study you will be required to complete a short questionnaire in relation to attitudes and opinions in relation to the change in the noise legislation and the control measures already in place to reduce employee noise exposure. Your staff will be requested to complete a separate questionnaire relating to attitudes to the use of hearing protection and experience of hearing troubles in their past. Each questionnaire is expected to take no longer than 10 minutes to complete.

(iv) Basic screening test for hearing:

If you enter into this study you will be required to allow the researcher to approach consenting nightclub employees to carry out a basic screening test to ascertain if they can hear a noise at the loudness of a whisper. Each test should take no longer than 5 minutes.



If you have been thinking of carrying out noise risk assessments in the past, this is an opportunity to make a conscious effort to work proactively on becoming compliant with the new noise legislation.

Confidentiality

You, your employees or the nightclub will not be referred to by name in any of the documents relating to the masters research. The data generated as a result of the research study shall be treated confidentially. Information collected about you, your employees or the nightclub premises will be kept strictly private and will not be disclosed to a third party. Data will only be kept for the use in the analysis for the research masters purpose.

Refusal or Withdrawal without Penalty

Your taking part in this study is your choice. There will be no penalty if you decide not to be in the study. You are free to withdraw from this research study at any time. Your choice to leave the study will not affect your relationship with the researcher or the Dublin Institute of Technology institution.

Questions

If you wish to avail of these free risk assessments and noise measurements or have any additional questions please feel free to contact me, Aoife Kelly by email on aoifek84@yahoo.co.uk or on 01 814 6086 or 085 7230 653.