



Environmental, Health, and Safety (EHS) Guidelines
GENERAL EHS GUIDELINES: ENVIRONMENTAL
NOISE MANAGEMENT



WORLD BANK GROUP

1.7 Noise

Applicability

This section addresses impacts of noise beyond the property boundary of the facilities. Worker exposure to noise is covered in Section 2.0 on Occupational Health and Safety.

Prevention and Control

Noise prevention and mitigation measures should be applied where predicted or measured noise impacts from a project facility or operations exceed the applicable noise level guideline at the most sensitive point of reception.⁵² The preferred method for controlling noise from stationary sources is to implement noise control measures at source.⁵³

Methods for prevention and control of sources of noise emissions depend on the source and proximity of receptors.

Noise reduction options that should be considered include:

- Selecting equipment with lower sound power levels
- Installing silencers for fans
- Installing suitable mufflers on engine exhausts and compressor components
- Installing acoustic enclosures for equipment casing radiating noise
- Improving the acoustic performance of constructed buildings, apply sound insulation
- Installing acoustic barriers without gaps and with a continuous minimum surface density of 10 kg/m² in order to minimize the transmission of sound through the

barrier. Barriers should be located as close to the source or to the receptor location to be effective

- Installing vibration isolation for mechanical equipment
- Limiting the hours of operation for specific pieces of equipment or operations, especially mobile sources operating through community areas
- Re-locating noise sources to less sensitive areas to take advantage of distance and shielding
- Siting permanent facilities away from community areas if possible
- Taking advantage of the natural topography as a noise buffer during facility design
- Reducing project traffic routing through community areas wherever possible
- Planning flight routes, timing and altitude for aircraft (airplane and helicopter) flying over community areas
- Developing a mechanism to record and respond to complaints

Noise Level Guidelines

Noise impacts should not exceed the levels presented in Table 1.7.1, or result in a maximum increase in background levels of 3 dB at the nearest receptor location off-site.

⁵² A point of reception or receptor may be defined as any point on the premises occupied by persons where extraneous noise and/or vibration are received. Examples of receptor locations may include: permanent or seasonal residences; hotels / motels; schools and daycares; hospitals and nursing homes; places of worship; and parks and campgrounds.

⁵³ At the design stage of a project, equipment manufacturers should provide design or construction specifications in the form of "Insertion Loss Performance" for silencers and mufflers, and "Transmission Loss Performance" for acoustic enclosures and upgraded building construction.

Table 1.7.1- Noise Level Guidelines⁵⁴

Receptor	One Hour L_{Aeq} (dBA)	
	Daytime 07:00 - 22:00	Nighttime 22:00 - 07:00
Residential; institutional; educational ⁵⁵	55	45
Industrial; commercial	70	70

m to any reflecting surface (e.g., wall). In general, the noise level limit is represented by the background or ambient noise levels that would be present in the absence of the facility or noise source(s) under investigation.

Highly intrusive noises, such as noise from aircraft flyovers and passing trains, should not be included when establishing background noise levels.

Monitoring

Noise monitoring⁵⁶ may be carried out for the purposes of establishing the existing ambient noise levels in the area of the proposed or existing facility, or for verifying operational phase noise levels.

Noise monitoring programs should be designed and conducted by trained specialists. Typical monitoring periods should be sufficient for statistical analysis and may last 48 hours with the use of noise monitors that should be capable of logging data continuously over this time period, or hourly, or more frequently, as appropriate (or else cover differing time periods within several days, including weekday and weekend workdays). The type of acoustic indices recorded depends on the type of noise being monitored, as established by a noise expert. Monitors should be located approximately 1.5 m above the ground and no closer than 3

⁵⁴ Guidelines values are for noise levels measured out of doors. Source: Guidelines for Community Noise, World Health Organization (WHO), 1999.

⁵⁵ For acceptable indoor noise levels for residential, institutional, and educational settings refer to WHO (1999).

⁵⁶ Noise monitoring should be carried out using a Type 1 or 2 sound level meter meeting all appropriate IEC standards.