



Victoria Government Gazette

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Subordinate Legislation Act 1994

VICTORIAN WORKCOVER AUTHORITY Occupational Health and Safety (Noise) Regulations 2004

Notice is given in accordance with section 11 of the **Subordinate Legislation Act 1994**, that a Regulatory Impact Statement (RIS) has been prepared in relation to the proposed Occupational Health and Safety (Noise) Regulations 2004.

The objective of these Regulations is to reduce the exposure of employees to noise in the workplace so as to reduce the incidence and severity of hearing loss resulting from excessive exposure to noise.

The proposed Regulations will require employers to assess employees' exposure to noise if it is likely that exposure will exceed the exposure standard; ensure that no employee at the workplace is exposed to noise that exceeds the exposure standard by implementing a prescribed hierarchy of control; provide audiometric testing for employees required to use hearing protectors to control exposure to noise; arrange for the employee to undergo an audiological examination in certain circumstances; consult with the health and safety representative—or if no health and safety representative, with the affected employees—when proposing to conduct noise assessments or adopt control measures; and provide information, instruction and training to employees. The proposed Regulations also place specific duties on designers, manufacturers and suppliers of plant.

The costs and benefits of the proposed Regulations are considered in the RIS. The net benefits over a ten year period (that is, benefits less costs) are estimated in the RIS to be \$131.8 million in discounted terms at a discount rate of 6 per cent.

The RIS examines two alternatives to the proposed Regulations, namely: (i) to lower the noise exposure threshold from 85 dB(A) to 80 dB(A); and (ii) supporting the general duties under the **Occupational Health and Safety Act**

1985 by reliance on a code of practice alone. The RIS concludes that alternative (i) would impose additional costs that could not be justified by the additional benefits at this time, while alternative (ii) would not be likely to yield the desired reduction in the incidence and severity of noise-induced hearing loss.

Public comments are invited on the RIS and draft Regulations. Copies may be obtained by contacting WorkSafe publications [tel. (03) 9641 1333; fax: (03) 9641 1330], or may be downloaded from the Victorian WorkCover Authority website at www.workcover.vic.gov.au

Written submissions should be directed to the following address by no later than close of business 24 November 2003: Chairperson, Noise Policy Group, Legislation Branch, Strategy and Programs Division, WorkSafe Victoria, GPO Box 4306, Melbourne, Vic. 3001. Fax: (03) 9641 1208.

Submissions may also be forwarded in electronic form (either as a Microsoft Word or Rich Text Format document) to the following e-mail address by the same date: noise_review@workcover.vic.gov.au

All submissions received will be treated as public documents.

Any enquiries about the draft Regulations should be directed to Mr Alex Simovski, Occupational Hygiene Unit, [tel. (03) 9641 1749], while enquiries regarding the RIS should be directed to the Legislation Branch on (03) 9641 1491.

ROB HULLS, MP
Minister for WorkCover

SPECIAL

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