



# Controlling Noise at Work: The Route to Compliance

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# A brief CV

- Over 20 years experience of event and concert production
- Qualified Health and Safety professional
- Director of The Event Safety Shop Ltd
- Clients include: Robbie Williams, Glastonbury Festival, Doha Asian Games, the Ministry of Defence, Oxfam, VT Shipbuilding...



# The Noise Problem

# How does the problem arise?

- Amplification is necessary and instrumentation is inherently loud
- Poor practice amongst engineers & designers
- Competition amongst performers for monitoring
- Artistes & crew do not perceive a risk
- ...and most importantly...



# Because we like it loud!



# The Rock and Roll Industry



# Compounding the problem

- Very Fragmented: predominantly small businesses
- Very variable working arrangements
- Huge number of temporary and freelance workers
- Few formal contractual arrangements
- Little formal training or career path
- Regulation is seen as “The Enemy”

# The Result?

- It is often difficult to identify the relevant duty-holder
- Sometimes duty-holders do not have direct control over noise levels
- Ambiguity allows people to fail to tackle the issue properly
- People remain consistently at risk



# Impediments to Progress

A person is playing a guitar, with their hands and the instrument visible. The background is a soft, out-of-focus mix of purple and blue colors. The text is overlaid on the upper left portion of the image.

- Technical 12%
- Artistic 18%
- Cultural 70%

# So, how do you change a culture?

- Not with rules and regulations!
- Flexible and varied strategies required
- Campaigns and word of mouth in the short term and training in medium/long
- The argument for adopting new working **MUST** be on the basis of Enlightened Self Interest

# Selling the Plan





A man in a dark suit, light blue scarf, and jeans is walking on a stage. The stage is illuminated with bright red light from several tall, perforated pillars. In the background, a large screen displays a red starburst pattern. The scene is set at night, with stage lights visible above. The word "Artistes" is written in white text at the bottom of the image.

Artistes



- Early education about the risks
- Increased clarity of monitoring
- Enhanced artistic content
- A more enjoyable performance
- Reduced personal exposure
- Extended working life



Crew

- More pleasant work environment
- Easier to communicate
- Increased effectiveness of monitoring
- Extended working life
- Realistic working hours (festivals etc.)  
whilst achieving compliance



## WARNING! TO ALL STAGE, SOUND AND LX CREWS

The sound levels on this stage are dangerously loud, and you may have to work in it for many hours. Please take a couple of minutes to read this notice – it could help you for the rest of your life.

Work on this stage could cause permanent hearing damage. Eventually you may be unable to continue working in the live music business

The Noise at Work Regulations set a maximum daily dose of 90dB over 8 hours. The table below shows how quickly you can get an equivalent dose in a loud stage environment.

Average noise level	Time taken to receive dose
90 dB(A)	8 hours
101 dB(A)	½ hour
111 dB(A)	3¼ minutes

- Hearing damage is permanent and irreversible
- Causes deafness and can lead to other illness
- Causes stress, pain and irritation
- May cause tinnitus - a constant ringing generated inside the ear, so annoying some sufferers have committed suicide

### **TAKE THESE SIMPLE STEPS TO PROTECT YOUR HEARING:**

- ❑ Turn it down whenever you can – keep stage levels to a minimum
- ❑ Use the disposable hearing protection available from production
- ❑ Invest in a personal set of earplugs. They cost a few quid and give excellent protection.



# Employers



- Statutory compliance
- Moral obligations
- Reduced likelihood of workplace injury claim
- Reduced healthcare costs (incl. sick leave, surveillance, audiometric etc.)
- Enhanced staff fidelity
- Extended working life



# Venue Operators / Promoters

- Statutory compliance
- Moral obligations
- General welfare benefits
- Increased effectiveness of non-technical staff
- Reduced likelihood of civil claim
- Reduced insurance costs
- Venue development – enhanced sales



A photograph of a concert stage at night. The stage is illuminated by numerous bright spotlights, creating a dramatic atmosphere. The audience is visible in the foreground, silhouetted against the bright stage lights. The text is overlaid on the image, centered horizontally and vertically.

Reducing stage sound levels will  
..it's just not very Rock and Roll!  
have positive benefits for all

