

Webinar of 2022-11-25

Webinar 'Webinar 'Hearing for life – How can hearing protection support?'

Questions & Answers

1	Why is 82 dB(A) selected for entertainment audio signal? The first action level for noise is 80 dB(A).	The background to the number 82 dBA is the assumption that the combination of entertainment audio and the remaining noise may reach 85 dBA. This is to be put in relation to the exposure limit value 87 dBA in the Noise directive, which in many countries is lowered to 85 dBA.
2	Can you please explain what a sound level "effective to the ear" means? Is it the level in the cavity between the hearing protector and the ear drum?	It is correct that it refers to the level at the ear, inside the hearing protection. This is however related to what the level would be if it was measured in a free field condition with a sound level meter. The same type of measurement as the environmental noise level would be measured and that the action levels and noise regulations are based on.
3	With regards to earmuffs with audio: Does the limitation to 82 dB(A) also is warranted in case safety goggles cause some leakage?	The 82 dBA limitation is only referring to the reproduced sound from the product. The sound attenuation from the product and potential effect on the sound attenuation from leakage need to be considered as well, but in relation to the sound attenuation performance according to EN352-1, 2 or 3.
4	In Portugal, the daily exposure value for workers that does not pose risk to hearing health is 80 dB(A). Using the hearing protectors, what is the minimum dB(A) value that the user hears allowing to perceive alarms and other verbal instructions?	If you refer to products with a level dependent function to reproduce the surrounding sound the standards EN352-4 for earmuffs and -7 for earplugs require to declare what is called criterion level. That means the noise level that results in 85 dBA effective to the ear. This is the combined contribution from the electronic function and the passively attenuated noise. How the reproduced sound is controlled or compressed may vary from product to product.
5	The criteria for selection of hearing protection seem to be reduced to the	That is right. We also have a table with environmental factors in the standard. By the lack of time, I had taken out this aspect. Thank you.

	audiological criteria. But there is much more too it...	
6	Is there any experience in the working group relating to the performance of the Quietpro hearing protection system? How does this equipment perform compared to other products? We have seen the Quietpro system utilised in offshore environment.	We know it only in the military and offshore field, not in typical industrial workplaces. It is a very good system. At the moment, it is too expensive for the industry, but it could also be useful there.
7	In practice, the functional testing of customized hearing protectors is currently handled differently in each country. In most countries it is not implemented. When will functional testing be treated mandatory throughout the EU in the same way?	We know this. I think that it should be discussed within the PPE Sector forum. Within the TC 159, it was not yet possible to specify a common approach. But I will take your information in the TC discussion.
8	Photo on slide65 shows muffs worn over hat which will affect attenuation	That is correct. This is also an example that specific information and instruction of the parents regarding fitting and usage of these products are important.
9	When do you think the certification for children (under the age of 5) is finalised?	Good question. :) We are still at the very beginning of the work. There are basic aspects still open. I don't think I am able to give you a valid estimation, sorry.
10	Is this approach addressed to children limited to earmuffs or will it also be applied to other kinds of hearing protection (earplugs)?	At the moment, the WG is only dealing with earmuffs for children between 2 and 5 years. But we also will address earplugs later on. The crucial point here is the size of ear canals of children (also in comparison with those of adults). We have to investigate further here.
11	We hope to also help the working committee in protection committee, can they be invited to a forum with those set of stakeholders mentioned, thank you so much for organizing this webinar and thanks to the speakers.	Remark: I am not sure what is meant here. Does the question refer to the topic of children's hearing protectors? For which we would need additional experts? But I don't think we need a separate forum – this is our WG.