The Employer's Guide to Noise-at-Work Hearing Compliance

What the law requires, what's at risk, and how to get compliant — simply.

BFG Hearing Solutions · Team Valley, Gateshead · 0191 5111 878

Why this guide

Hearing damage from noise at work is permanent, common — and entirely preventable. It's also one of the most claimed-for workplace injuries in the UK. If any of your employees work around noise, you have legal duties — and getting them right protects both your team and your business. This short guide explains it in plain English.

1. What the law says

The Control of Noise at Work Regulations 2005 set out what employers must do about noise. Two key thresholds (daily exposure):

Action value	Level	What it means
Lower	80 dB(A)	Provide information and training, and make hearing protection available.
Upper	85 dB(A)	Reduce exposure, enforce hearing protection zones, and provide health surveillance (hearing tests).

If your risk assessment shows employees are exposed at or above the upper action value, you must place them under suitable health surveillance — and that means regular hearing testing (audiometry).

2. Do you actually need testing?

A simple rule of thumb from the HSE: if your staff have to raise their voices to have a normal conversation about 2 metres apart, noise is likely a problem and you should assess it.

Workplaces that commonly need hearing surveillance include:

- Manufacturing, engineering and fabrication
- Construction, joinery and woodworking
- Automotive, bodyshops and tyre fitters
- Foundries and metalworking
- Warehousing and logistics
- Breweries, bottling and food production
- Music venues and events

3. How often must you test?

- Baseline test when an employee starts in a noisy role.
- Then annually for the first two years.
- Then every three years (more often if hearing changes are detected or risk is high).

You must keep health records, and refer anyone showing signs of damage for further assessment.

4. What's at risk if you don't

Risk	What it can mean
HSE enforcement	Improvement or prohibition notices, and prosecution. Fines run into tens of thousands — one firm and its director were fined over £32,000 for ignoring noise notices. Directors can be personally liable, and convictions appear on the HSE's public register.

Risk	What it can mean
Compensation claims	Former employees can claim for noise-induced hearing loss years later. Payouts commonly run £14,000–£36,000 per person for mild-to-moderate loss (up to £140,000 for severe), plus legal costs.
Higher insurance	Claims push up your employers' liability premiums — and without records, claims are very hard to defend.

> **THE KEY POINT**
> Regular audiometry gives you a documented baseline and history of each employee's hearing. Without it, it's very hard to prove a loss wasn't caused at your workplace. Your records are your single best defence — and a single avoided claim can pay for testing many times over.

5. Your quick compliance checklist

- Carry out a noise risk assessment for your workplace.
- Identify which roles are exposed at or above 85 dB(A).
- Provide and enforce suitable hearing protection.
- Arrange baseline audiometry for noise-exposed staff.
- Schedule annual tests (first two years), then every three years.
- Keep individual health records and act on any referrals.
- Train staff on noise risks and protection.

6. How BFG makes it simple

- Testing at our Team Valley clinic, or we come to you and work around your shifts — the price is the same either way.
- Done by an HCPC-registered audiologist, not a technician.
- Individual results, an anonymised grouped report for your records, and a referral pathway.
- A reminder when your next round is due — so you stay compliant year after year.

Pricing

What	Price
Per employee — at our clinic or on your site	**£48**
Minimum charge per visit	**£480**
Full day, up to 24 staff	**£995**
Beyond 24 staff	**£995 + £48/head**

All prices plus VAT. One rate whether we test at our clinic or at your premises — there is no longer a separate on-site rate.

Book a free, no-obligation quote: 0191 5111 878 · info@bfghearingsolutions.co.uk · bfghearingsolutions.co.uk/industrial-hearing

This guide is general information, not legal advice. For your specific obligations, refer to current HSE guidance or a competent health and safety adviser.