

**MINUTES OF THE 13TH MEETING OF THE ENGINEERING INDUSTRY
TASK NOISE GROUP (EINTG) ON 21ST OCTOBER 2003 AT HSE
BIRMINGHAM**

Attendees

Gary Booton – Engineering Employers Federation (EEF) (EINTG Chairman)
Bob Taylor - British Turned Parts Manufacturers Association (BTPMA)
Colin Holdhusen - Corus
David Allison – Marine Painting Forum
Martin Bevan – General Municipal Boilermakers and Allied Trades Union (GMB)
Tarla Patel – HSE
Bob Hanlon – EEF West Midlands
Graham Watson – HSE (EINTG Secretary) Manufacturing Sector
Tim Ward – HSE Technology Directorate
Nigel Day – Personal Safety Manufacturers Association
Mick Millichamp – Amicus – MSF National Executive
Tim Humphries – Association of British Insurers

Apologies

Peter Scott – Jungheinrich UK Ltd
Tony McCarthy – National Union of Domestic Appliances and General Operatives Union
Stan Hardy – Confederation of British Metalforming
Marjory Mitchell and Andie Michael – HSE
David Brotherton – Metalforming Machinery Makers Association
Peter Wilson – Industrial Noise and Vibration Centre
Richard Griffiths – The Manufacturing Technologies Association

Minutes of the last meeting

The minutes were approved following amendment to the date of the 16/04/2004 meeting, which should be 16/03/04.

Matters arising from the minutes not on the agenda

At the 12th meeting Inside UK Enterprise and the Good Neighbour schemes were identified as two possible ways of sharing good practice on noise. Graham Watson reported that after further research there seemed limited scope for utilising the Inside UK Enterprise scheme. Only a small number of the companies involved identify health and safety as a specialist area. There is also no information on whether this includes noise. The 'Good Neighbour Scheme has greater potential, members were asked to identify companies with good noise practices who would be willing to share their knowledge with others.

Action: Members

Gary Booton identified that EU funding for health and safety initiatives targeted at SMEs is generally funded year after year. Due to the time involved in preparing a bid it was suggested that the Task Group make an early start on this in readiness for the next round of funding becoming available. Gary Booton undertook to draft a proposal for the next meeting. Members were asked to assist with this, which could be by e-mail.

Action: Gary Booton and members.

EINTG Membership

New members welcomed at the meeting were Nigel Day (Personal Safety Manufacturers Association) and Mick Millichamp (Amicus – MSF National Executive). Graham Watson updated the group on contact with the RNID. Unfortunately no progress had been made with them becoming members of the task group. It was agreed that the meetings' minutes should continue to be sent to the RNID.

Action: Graham Watson.

Extending the task group to cover all manufacturing was discussed. It was agreed that the group should try and identify key intermediaries in manufacturing where noise is felt to be an issue. Relevant industries included woodwork, textiles, plastics etc and also those not covered by HSE's Manufacturing Sector such as food. David Allison suggested referring to attendees at last year's workshop on the Physical Agents (Noise) Directive to find those interested in noise. Tarla Patel agreed to look further into this. Members also agreed to identify key stakeholders and for contact to be made.

Action: Tarla Patel and members.

Mick Millichamp felt there was a need for a stronger partnership to be formed between HSE and manufacturing and the task group could help to achieve this. The use of case studies was thought to be positive particularly if they showed low cost remedies demonstrating what can be achieved. It was noted the engineering sector in particular still needed to make more progress with complying with Noise at Work Regulations.

Mission Statement, Terms of Reference, Business Plan

Graham Watson felt that before extending the task group's membership it was important to make sure the mission statement, terms of reference and business plan remain fit for purpose. To justify the involvement of HSE and other members in the task group it was also important to show the Groups achievements and progress made against targets.

Mission Statement

This was felt to still be acceptable although the reference to noise needed qualifying to make it clearer it did not include environmental noise.

Terms of Reference

It was generally agreed that the terms of reference were still fit for purpose. However, there was a need for 'noise priority topic' to be removed from point 3 since noise is no longer a priority programme.

Business Plan

Point 1 Reflected a need to develop practical support of the Task Group, a 'to do' for the future when the new noise regulations come into force. Agreed to add the words 'or businesses after the word legislative.

Point 2 Agreed more should be done on promotion of good practice such as drafting additional press articles based on case studies which could for example link into the 'Good Neighbour Scheme.' Agreed the reference to the website should be updated to reflect recent changes.

Point 3 Members agreed to continue to promote noise within their own organisations.

Point 4 Covered in section 9 of the agenda.

Point 5 Guidance on what constitutes a good noise assessment had been produced. Action was still needed regarding site action plans. Martin Bevan agreed to look into developing a HAZMAP as used by the GMB, in relation to noise.

Action: Martin Bevan.

It was agreed not to proceed with developing a pocket card on noise, as there was little benefit in duplicating the existing HSE employee card. Nigel Day felt it was crucial that as well as focusing on the use of ear protection, management needs to also pay particular attention to making sure ear protection purchased is suitable and comfortable to wear and that people are trained in how to wear it correctly. He agreed to draft guidance for the task group expanding on these points. He also confirmed that members of the Personal Safety Manufacturers Association would be happy to carry out on site demonstrations of how to wear ear protection correctly. This did not however extend to helping with noise assessments, as this would be too labour intensive.

Action: Nigel Day

It was important to reduce machinery noise levels and to increase awareness of the benefits of buying quieter machines Case studies featuring companies that had successfully done so would be of assistance. Members agreed to help identify suitable case study material.

Action: Members

It was agreed that it would be useful if manufacturers provided recommended noise levels with machinery instructions. Tim Ward detailed that a seminar has been planned for December 2003 for machine manufacturers and suppliers, to set out benchmarks on noise against which suppliers and manufacturers will be asked to compare their machinery. After which visits will be made to assess standards and offer assistance. Preliminary focus will be on power presses, punch presses and metal cutting saws

The noise control information sheets by Peter Wilson will soon be available on the HSE noise web pages, along with Tim Ward's noise assessment sheet. Members agreed to circulate the availability of the information sheets amongst interested parties. *Update: The sheets are now on the HSE noise web pages at: <http://www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/noisindx.htm>*

Action: Members

Holding seminars to demystify the issue of noise and noise control were discussed and were broadly supported. Task group members both participating in and hosting the seminars. Tim Ward and Bob Hanlon agreed to work up details for the seminars including costings for next meeting.

Action: Tim Ward and Bob Hanlon

It was also agreed that it would be useful to have case studies detailing low cost noise solutions. Bob Taylor stated that they were undertaking work in their factory which may be useful as a case study and agreed to provide further details. He also agreed to approach the British Turned Parts Manufacturers Association to try and identify further possible case studies.

Action: Bob Taylor

Raising awareness of the effects of exposure to noise amongst employees was also discussed. Martin Bevan and Mick Millichamp agreed to try and identify possible case study material based on compensation claims for noise induced deafness.

Action: Martin Bevan and Mick Millichamp

Compensation Claims for Noise Induced Hearing Loss

It was reported that since 1997 there has been a steep decline in the number of claims. While this could be beginning to level out it was too early to be certain. Nevertheless in 2001 there were nearly 3500 claims, which confirm NIHL is still an area of concern where long-term improvements are wanted.

Noise Supply Side Initiative

This was discussed under point 5 of the terms of reference referred to above.

Tool Box Talk Pack

Graham Watson discussed the 'Tool Box Talk Pack' which is intended to be self-explanatory and address the need for hearing protection, how it should be worn, employers' duties etc. It has been designed as a single session but is comprised of 3 parts, which can be delivered separately. The talk is intended to last for approximately 30 minutes but has still to be trialled to verify this. Martin Bevan stated that he hoped to involve safety representatives in trialling the pack sometime before December. Members were asked to forward any comments that they had on the talk to Graham Watson by the end of December.

Action: Martin Bevan and members.

Graham Watson explained that the activities of HSE's publications department have recently been reviewed. This included a review of HSE publications awaiting publication. As a result of the review a moratorium has been placed on the production of the talk. The result of which is that the talk will not be published by HSE this current work year, if at all. Gary Booton stated that this was particularly disappointing given the effort invested by members of the task group in the talk. He will write to Timothy Walker, the head of the Health and Safety Executive, regarding the matter. Martin Bevan and Mick Millichamp will likewise write to Owen Tudor, a Health and Safety Commissioner.

Action: Gary Booton, Martin Bevan and Mick Millichamp

Colin Holdhussen queried whether the toolbox talk would be available electronically. Graham Watson replied that this has still to be determined but that it was a possibility.

Information Sheets

This was discussed under Point 5 of agenda item 6.

Sound Solutions

Updated case studies are ready for web site publication, but are to be re-numbered (work in progress). Tim Ward also mentioned that HSE were in the process of compiling case studies for a second edition of the Sound Solutions publication.

HSE Noise Programme

Graham Watson ran through the HSE Noise Topic Pack used by HSE Inspectors to help assess how well employers are controlling the risk from noise. Employers can however use the pack themselves to judge their own performance. The pack also highlights a wide variety of common sources of noise as well as steps that can be taken to control the noise at source. Task Group members observed that the pack was both practical and useful. Gary

Booton and Martin Bevan stated that they would arrange for the pack to be placed on their respective websites. Tarla Patel also undertook to enquire if the pack could be placed on the HSE noise web page.

Action: Tarla Patel.

Graham Watson informed members that whilst noise is no longer a HSE priority programme, HSE inspectors were frequently raising it as an issue during the course of their visits. Whilst targets have not been set for this year the number of visits made so far this year is equal to 180% of the visits made over the same period last year.

Noise Directive

Tarla Patel updated members on the new Noise at Work Regulations. The regulations will go for internal HSE consultation in Nov/Dec 2003 with a paper going to the Health and Safety Commission in February 2004. It is then intended that a consultative document will be published in March 2004 with comments to be back by June 2004.

Any other business

None raised

Date of next meeting

16th March 2004, EEF West Midlands 10:30 am

19th October 2004, EEF (Broadway House), London, 11:00 am