

WHO Environmental Noise Guidelines for the European Region

What is new?

4. Implementation of Guidelines and Implications for Practice

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Overview

- Basics
- Target audience of the Guidelines
- Usefulness/usability of the Guidelines
- Promotion of the Guidelines
- Implementation of the Guidelines into noise policy
- Assessment of Guideline impact
- Further updates of the Guidelines
- Conclusions

Some basics

- What the Guidelines offer for the user
 - exposure-response relationships for different sources
 - guideline values, recommendations ("health based exposure limits")



Target audience

- Considered audiences:
 - Various technical experts and decision-makers at local, national or international level
 - Health Impact Assessment and Environmental Impact Assessment practitioners and researchers
 - Authorities and non-governmental organizations engaged in risk communication and general awareness raising
- Geographical region: European Region
 - But: Recommendations may also be applied to countries outside of the WHO European Region
 - Evidence reviews for the Guidelines considered research from other areas of the world
- Users of exposure indicators L_{den} and L_{night}
 - Practical guidance on conversions between metrics will be provided

Where will the Guidelines be used?

- **Starting position:** National needs, including the need for capacity building, differ in the various countries of the WHO European Region
- → Thus the level of implementation of the Guidelines will probably vary between countries
- The recommendations are more likely to be implemented in EU Member States due to the legally binding provisions of the END
- WHO has not (yet) developed specific noise guidelines for **other WHO regions**
 - → Guidelines for the "European Region" will also be used **globally**

Usefulness of Guidelines (1/2)

- For decision makers and technical experts:
 - Guidelines provide **exposure-response relationships** that give insight into the consequences of certain regulations with regard to the associated health effects
 - Guidelines provide basics for developing **noise limits** and standards in national regulations
 - Guidelines allow comparison amongst different policy options with regard to the associated health effect
 - Guidelines and can be valuable information to use in cost-effectiveness and cost-benefit analyses of various policies
- For Health Impact Assessment and Environmental Impact Assessment specialists:
 - Guidelines provide important input to derive the health burden from noise

Usefulness of Guidelines (2/2)

- For scientists and researchers:
 - Guidelines have clearly identified critical research gaps that will need to be filled in the future

Promotion and policy implementation

- Starting position:
In most countries of the European Region, the commitment of the **health sector** to engage in action to address environmental noise issues needs to be improved
- Actions of the health sector needed to implement Guidelines:
 - Engaging in proper communication with relevant sectors about noise exposure from different sectors and sources...
 - ... with the goal that the noise issue is adequately addressed
 - Promoting the Guidelines recommendations to policy makers
 - Promoting the Guidelines to health practitioners and physicians
 - Promoting pertinent research initiatives based on critical research recommendations and gaps identified

Assessment of Guideline impact

- Starting position: Exposure-response relationships, as well as other recommendations that are part of the Guidelines should be incorporated into **national health policies**
- Assessment of policy impact:
 - Population noise exposures should be monitored and assessed at national scale
 - Information on trends in occurrence of noise related health outcomes should be gathered (such as annoyance and sleep disturbance)
 - Monitoring activities should be performed on a regular basis in order to perform proper health risk assessment of noise

Updating the Guidelines

- Starting position:
 - The progress and pace in noise effects and health research has intensified over the last decade
 - This is partly related to growing transportation, demographic changes and densification
 - Increase in public perception and political awareness of the environmental noise problem
 - Noise exposure assessment has improved and provided useful data for the conduct of epidemiological studies on the health effects noise
- →→ Taking this into account, it is expected that the Guidelines will remain valid for a period of about **10 years**
- WHO will monitor further advancements in noise effects research

Final conclusions

- The Guidelines should serve as an integral part of the policy process for noise reduction by various institutions
- Guidelines are of greatest value in order to communicate the health risks of noise
- Guidelines can be useful by providing **exposure-response relationships** and health-based **exposure limits** ("guideline values")

... and outlook...

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