

MAKROSAFE Holdings (Pty) Ltd

SAFETY ALERT!

Personal music players in the workplace.

The purpose of this safety alert is to highlight the dangers associated with personal music players in the workplace and suggest possible control measures to assist industry to manage the risk.



Background

With the availability of personal technology, a growing number of workers are now listening at work to music on personal music players (e.g. MP3s, mobile phones with music capacity). The use of these devices may not be suitable for workers who operate or work with machinery because of an increased risk of injury and noise-induced hearing loss.

Contributing factors

- ✓ Personal music players can be distracting and lead to failure to pay attention
- ✓ In certain circumstances these devices may fully isolate the wearer from external noises, some of which may be needed to be heard by the worker to work safely.
- ✓ Potential for noise-induced hearing loss. Sound outputs of new-generation devices can be 90 to 120 decibels on maximum setting, giving a range of 2.5 hours to only 9 seconds before the exposure standard for noise is exceeded.

Action Required

- ✓ Employers and people in control of workplaces should act in accordance with their legal obligations to identify, assess and control hazards in the workplace.
- ✓ Where personal music players are being used, employers or people in control should carry out risk assessments in consultation with the workers involved.
- ✓ Employers should have clear policies so that workers understand what the risks are and what the safe system of work is.
- ✓ Employees are reminded that they are responsible for their own safety and health at work and should consider if the use of a personal music player is appropriate while working.