

TAKE THIRTY

Introduction - Peter Baker, Head of HSSE

At the time of writing this, I have just returned from leave. When working in a support function such as HSSE it's often easy to get caught up in thinking it's all about numbers, procedures and processes etc. but visits home to see family and friends serve as a timely reminder that what is really important is that we create a culture within Douglas OHI in which we can all work and live in a safe and healthy environment.

My personal goal is to improve the lives of those who rely on me back at home, my work-related goals include helping others achieve the same.

To this end, please continue to look out for the wellbeing of those around you and engage in the constructive HSSE conversations that will help everybody achieve their own personal goals.

Take time to read this month's main article which relates to Noise, a far bigger problem than most of us realise. Have a go at the "Noise Quiz" with a colleague, this will allow at least one of you to learn something you didn't know. The usual donation will be made to the charity of choice.

60 Seconds with - Barry Hoprey, Plant Manager



Q. What is your background?

A. I served for 25 years in the British Army, experiencing active service from the 1982 Falklands Conflict, to the 2003 Iraq War. After retiring from the Army, I lived and worked in Cyprus (which I know call home), then worked in Abu Dhabi, Dubai and Mozambique, before joining Douglas OHI as Plant Manager.

Q. When it comes to HSSE practice, what does "good" look like to you?

A. I am a great believer of leading by example, so "good" would be to do just that. Good HSSE practice would also be, that all employees have an understanding and awareness of what "good" looks like..

Q. How important is visible leadership in making the workplace safer?

A. My earlier response shows that the hierarchy demonstrates commitment to all levels of the business regarding the wellbeing of every employee. Listening to their views and understanding of what they think about HSSE and acting on that in a positive manner is essential.

Q. How would you describe a HSSE leader?

A. Someone who is committed, open, responsible, understands what is required and what we are aiming to achieve within the business. A person who will take time to educate and develop those around him and play an active role within the HSSE culture is a leader in my view, regardless of their job role.

Q. What would you like to see develop with regards to HSSE in the Plant Dept?

A. I would like all HSSE related activities to become second nature to all employees. I would like Managers, Chargehands and Foremen to be the driving force to the Junior Employees in developing a greater awareness of good HSSE practices. I will involve Managers, Chargehands and Foremen in delivering basic HSSE training to all personnel in their respective departments.

Q. Which football team do you support and why?

A. My favorite team is Liverpool Football Club, this is one of two major teams from the City of Liverpool, where I was born. My father took me to watch my first Liverpool FC match for my 5th birthday, Liverpool beat Wolverhampton Wanderers 2 - 1, Since that day I have been a lifelong supporter. Although I live in Oman I watch my team every week via the TV.



Noise by Saravanan Subramaniam

Construction sites and other workplaces can be very noisy places, there are situations where different trades come to the site for short periods to perform their work. This work may be indoors, outdoors or both.

Noise is something we often talk about but is more often misunderstood.

Sound Vs Noise

It is not that hard to discern noise from sound. It is just as simple as comparing a rotten tomato from an ordinary set of good-quality tomatoes. Noise is like a rotten tomato while sound is like a set of healthy tomatoes.

Sound is a result of the vibrating air in the surroundings. Vibration passes through the air. It creates different levels of air pressure (higher and lower) through air compression and decompression. These variations travel across the air in the form of sound waves which are responsible for the creation of sound. Although these can't be seen, sounds are perceived by the sense of hearing. One of the most pleasant forms and an example of sound is that which is generated by non-hardcore musical instruments.

Noise, on the contrary, is a kind of sound - a loud one. In this regard, shouts are the perfect examples of noise. It is characterized by its unpleasantness and annoying nature that can even lead to some physical ill effects. Aside from hearing loss, noise can also induce severe cardiovascular symptoms of increased heart rate and can bring about psychological effects that manifest as anxiety, lack of concentration, and profound nervousness. It may also be coincidental that the term "noise" is taken from a Latin word that literally means "nausea." Most HSE professionals define noise as "unwanted or injurious sound".

What does injurious sound mean?

Injurious sound is a sound that is loud enough or of a high pitch that it causes injury to the hearing organ i.e. the ear. The efficiency of our hearing will reduce naturally as we get older, it is inevitable and unavoidable. Exposure to Noise however causes what is known as a Noise Induced Hearing Loss (NIHL) in other words you become deaf or develop Tinnitus (a continuous humming or ringing in the ear). Damage to the hearing can occur after a single loud, short (acute) exposure or after continuous exposure over a long period (chronic), either way when hearing is gone, it is gone forever.

What is the unit of measurement for Noise?

Sound (unwanted or otherwise) is measured in decibels which is displayed as dB, however volume alone is not the true measure of the risk, we must also consider frequency (pitch), this is measured in Hertz i.e. denoted as Hz.

Noise is measured on a special (logarithmic) scale, although difficult for most of us to understand, when the noise levels increase by 3 dB, the sound is twice as loud. i.e. 85dB is twice as loud as 82dB!

What generates Noise in the workplace?

Perhaps the more interesting question is, what doesn't generate Noise in the workplace? Most workplaces expose us to noise. The louder the noise, the more damage it can cause. See below table for some common activities / examples that generate noise.

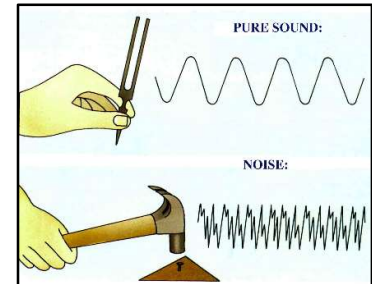
Tasks (Trade)	Average Noise Level (dBA)	Maximum Noise Level (dBA)
Excavation or digging using Backhoe (Operator/banksman)	84.0	93.0
Electric drill in timber (Carpenter/Helpers)	87.0	100.0
Installing Trench Conduit (Electricians)	95.8	118.6
Operating Work Vehicle (Brick layers)	98.0	116.7
Operating Man lift (Operating Engineers)	98.1	117.6
Welding, Burning (Ironworkers)	98.4	119.7
Operating Scraper (Operating Engineers)	99.1	108.6
Demolition (Laborers)	99.3	112.1
Laying Metal Deck (Iron workers)	99.6	119.9
Grinding (Masonry Trades)	99.7	118.6
Operating Bulldozer (Operating Engineers)	100.2	112.5
Chipping Concrete (Laborers)	102.9	120.3

Who can be affected by Noise?

We must never forget that it is not just the person performing the task who is at risk, quite literally anyone who can hear the noise can be affected.

Website Link

www.hse.gov.uk/noise/index.htm



How should we manage Noise in the workplace?

Apply the tried and tested Principles of Prevention (as defined in our HSE Procedure Manual).

Eliminate:

When noise monitoring results indicate that workers are exposed to harmful noise levels, the best way to protect them is to eliminate the noise exposure versus using personal protective equipment.

Reduce:

Reducing the volume will often be the most efficient way to reduce exposure. Most industrial noise is due to machinery operation or materials being worked on. Often small changes in equipment or processes can significantly reduce noise with little change in the efficiency or effectiveness of the work site. There are a variety of ways to reduce noises at the source. For consideration, use a different, quieter process or quieter equipment; Introduce engineering controls (Eg: fit silencers to air exhausts and blowing nozzles).

Isolate

If possible, isolate the noisy activities away from those who might be otherwise exposed (e.g. locate the cutting area away from the main workforce). We can also modify the paths by which the noise travels through the air to the people exposed (Eg: Use barriers and screens to block the direct path of sound thus isolating in to a certain area).

Control

Generally, these are administrative controls, in other words change work practices to minimize exposures. These will include Risk Assessments, Method Statements, Information, Instruction and Training, Supervision, Permit to Work as well as job rotation etc. We should also create noise demarcation zones using this type of signage.

PPE

Hearing protection should only be considered as a last resort where residual risk remains after steps have been taken to reduce noise levels. As a guide, ear plugs can reduce the noise level by 10-15 dB(A) and ear muffs by 20-25 dB(A), provided they are fitted correctly. Hearing protection should be suitable for the working environment and compatible with other items of Personal Protective Equipment.

Discipline

Conducting spot checks to see that the HSE rules are being followed and that hearing protection is being used properly will help in controlling the risks from noise. If employees carry on not using the suitable hearing protection properly, company disciplinary procedures must be applied.

Objections to wearing Ear Defence

Although noise levels at work often exceed 85dBA, some people do not always wear their hearing protection. Some of their most common complaints are that hearing protectors are uncomfortable, hot and create a situation where they cannot hear warning signals or fellow workers. Lack of training, inadequate supervision, lack of access to the appropriate ear defence are other factors.

These objections must be overcome to protect workers' hearing when noise levels exceed the limits allowed.

Employees need to be educated to understand that once they lose their hearing, it does not come back, it is that simple.

Have a discussion with your colleague to answer the Noise Quiz. Don't forget a donation of 10 OMR will be made to a charity of your choice. Write your name & employee No. in the space provided, scan and email to HSSE Department.

Noise Quiz:

1. Define Noise.
2. How much louder is 88dB than 85dB?
3. What color safety signs should be displayed to ensure people wear ear defense?
4. What type of health problems can noise cause?
5. What is the last resort in managing the risk posed by noise?
6. Who can have affected by Noise?

Name:

Emp. No:



Social Responsibility



Our Client at Sohar recently changed the colour coding for safety helmets on site. Thankfully the old helmets did not end up in landfill. DOHI SustainAbilities Team found a charity organization in Muscat which collects and sells the waste material to a plastic recycling company. The money received will be used for a social cause.

With an instantaneous nod for this approach from Sohar project team, the 1,568 helmets collected were donated to the charity. These plastic helmets will be recycled and used for manufacturing several other products. The money received from the plastic recycling company has been utilized in their ongoing project for the disadvantage family's house repair & maintenance work. The CEO of the charity organization highly appreciated our company's interest towards charity and presented a souvenir. Our charity work was published in their official social media too.

47th Oman National Day

Douglas OHI Ghala Head Office, Plant department, Sohar & Barka Project team celebrated the 47th National Day with pride, patriotic fervour and enthusiasm. The event in Ghala started with National anthem and words from Holy Quran followed by several activities, including a fun-filled Arabic speaking competition conducted for expat senior managers.

This employee engagement event expressed gratitude and honour to His Majesty and the people of this noble country for their love, kindness and encouragement which provides a positive environment and support in all our endeavours to achieve success in the business.

During this auspicious day, members of the HSSE department released 3 white doves as a symbol to celebrate as Oman is declared as the fifth most peaceful country in the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) region.



Book Donation Drive - School @ Nepal



Sohar project team & OTI joined hands and collected 6 cartons of children's books and donated them to Shree Chandeshwari School in Nepal, which was constructed last year with the IEF fund. We donated new/used story books, new drawing books and note books worth OMR. 125/-. The effort is praise worthy as almost 500 local students enrolled in this new facility are benefitting from this charity work.

Don't fly Balloons - MECA

A Sustainable initiative by the Ministry of Environment & Climate Affairs (MECA) in advance of this years' National Day celebration stated, 'if you're planning on letting fly with balloons to celebrate National Day, think again'.

It issued a statement asking residents not to fly balloons to celebrate during National day weekend in a concern that these balloons when falling into the sea will adversely affect the safety of the marine environment, as well as cause damage to the land. A deed which express the nation's interest for a sustainable nature.



From around the World (Sweden)

Crushed by crane during lifting operation

Background:

“Skanska (a large international contractor) had completed a residential project and had handed over the buildings to the client. However, there were rented temporary office/storage modules remaining. Jens Berglind was employed as a driver/crane operator by a haulage company, contracted by Skanska to remove them.

Incident:

On the day of the accident the Skanska owned storage module was lifted on to a truck, using a truck mounted crane, involving one slinger and one truck driver/crane operator. The truck driver, Jens Berglind transported the module to the Skanska storage depot.



At the storage facility Jens was alone. He parked his vehicle and placed a ladder against the wall of the module. He climbed up to reach the pre-coupled lifting chains on top of the module. Jens was wearing a pair of ear defenders with a built in bluetooth phone connection and was talking on the phone with a colleague and had the crane remote control unit slung over his shoulder.

Standing on the ladder, still on the phone talking with a colleague, Jens somehow touched the joystick of the remote control hanging over his shoulder resulting in the crane arm starting to move and Jens getting crushed between the module and the crane’s arm. A colleague aware that there was a problem called to another colleague. An ambulance arrived, but his life couldn’t be saved. Jens Berglind was 26 years old and leaves his mother, father, his brother and sister as well as his girlfriend in sorrow.”

Neither we or our subcontractors use this type of remotely operated crane and there are lots of questions arising from this sad incident however let’s concentrate on just a few: -

- Are we satisfied that our supply chain is aware of the Douglas OHI expectations when it comes to HSE?
- What telephone conversation is that important it can’t wait?
- Are our procedures robust enough when it comes to lone working?
- Are the same standards applied at the end of the job or away from the main work area?
- What must it be like to speak to the family of someone who has lost their life due to an avoidable workplace accident?

And Finally...

I attended a Toastmasters session recently and heard Richard Rosario (Senior Planning Engineer) give a talk on the subject of Sand.

The talk lasted approximately 7 minutes and included the common uses of sand, how it is created in the first place as well as the impact and environmental threats caused by sand mining in several countries. The talk was very interesting and informative, quite frankly (excluding the times my sandwiches have been ruined by the stuff on family trips to the beach) sand was not a subject I had thought about in the past.

We don’t use sand by choice, it is an essential element in one of the most common “artificial” construction materials used i.e. concrete. The truth is, we currently have little choice but to use it.

Sometimes it’s the little things that people say that are the most thought provoking because one of the things that struck me the most was his final statement “if we want our next generation to enjoy mother nature, we must be prudent in using our natural resources”.

It’s obvious really, so obvious we sometimes forget.

Think how we can apply this simply logic to our everyday lives and reduce the impact we make today with everyday products and resources such as water, plastic, fuel etc because one day there may not be enough left for everyone.

Food for Thought

EARN YOUR
LEADERSHIP
EVERYDAY.

MICHAEL JORDAN

Contact HSSE

We appreciate your feedback on our newsletter, and would welcome any articles, photos or questions. Simply email us at hsse@douglasohi.com.