Toolbox talks: nuisance

Noise and vibration

What?

- the construction industry is one of the leading sources of noise complaints made to local authorities
- something is considered “noisy” when the sound is unwanted by the listener
- noise and vibration emissions can disturb local residents and give rise to complaints and delays
- noisy activities include: excavation, tunnelling, concrete cutting, piling, using un-silenced generators and concrete pours.

Why?

- **avoid environmental harm:** noise can disturb wildlife as well as humans
- **avoid prosecution:** failing to meet noise constraints can result in fines
- **avoid programme delay:** the local authority have the power to stop works if noise from the site is causing a nuisance
- **avoid structural damage:** vibration may cause structural damage
- **public relations:** avoid complaints and maintain good relations with the local community.



Questions

1. Are there areas where undue noise might cause annoyance to anyone?
2. What unduly noisy operations are being undertaken on this project?
3. Where might vibration cause a problem?
4. What precautions can be taken to reduce noise and vibration on this site?

Do

- ✓ if possible, restrict noisy activities to certain times of the day
- ✓ adhere to working hours – some sites are only consented to work at certain times
- ✓ plan deliveries by arranging routes and times to minimise potential nuisance to the local community
- ✓ if possible, keep noisy plant away from public areas
- ✓ minimise drop heights into hoppers, lorries and other plant
- ✓ use local screening where necessary
  - noise can be reduced if a screen is placed between plant and a nearby sensitive location, ie house
  - screens can be straw bales or ply board
- ✓ use silenced generators and tower lights where necessary
- ✓ keep acoustic doors, hoods and panels on plant closed – it does make a difference
- ✓ minimise vehicles and plant reversing – plan work to incorporate one way systems
- ✓ if in doubt, contact a line manager.

Don’t

- ✗ undertake noisy works outside of normal working hours, in the evening, at night or early in the morning
- ✗ leave doors and hoods open on plant
- ✗ leave plant running unnecessarily
- ✗ use poorly maintained plant
- ✗ ignore complaints from the local community. Respond politely and pass the complaint onto a line manager
- ✗ shout or talk loudly where this could cause annoyance
- ✗ undertake activities that could cause damage to nearby structures through vibration unless approved by a line manager.

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