



JTA WEBINAR SERIES

How COVID-19 Is Affecting What We Hear



LIVE WEBINAR



Mission Statement



Our **Mission** is to co-create healthy, safe and productive workplaces for our clients' employees, so that we protect lives and help companies make real positive changes in their workplace culture



Presenters



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Principle Occupational Hygienist



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Agenda for today's webinar

- **House Keeping**

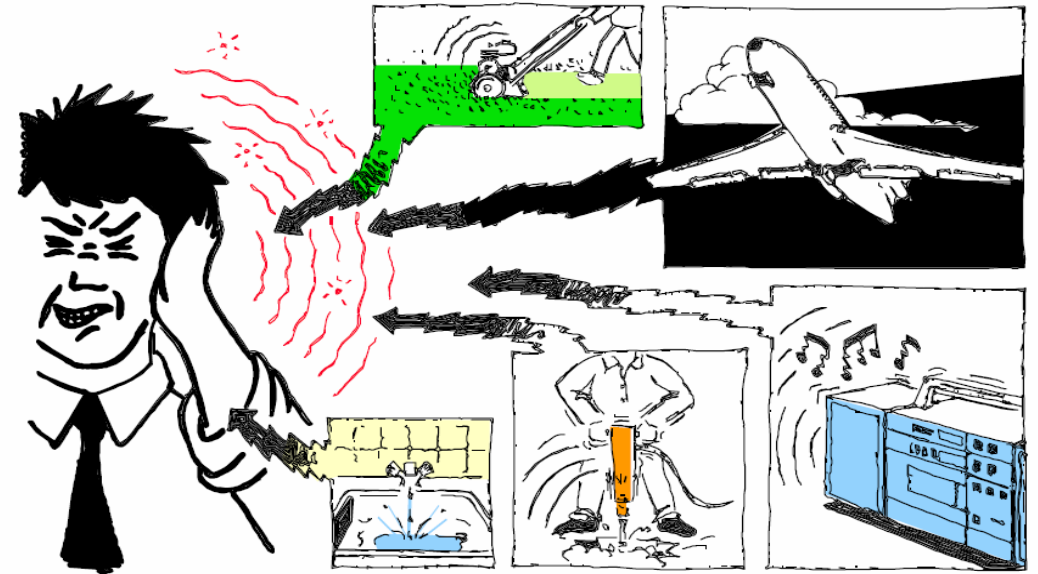
- **What You'll Learn**

Noise assessments during social distancing

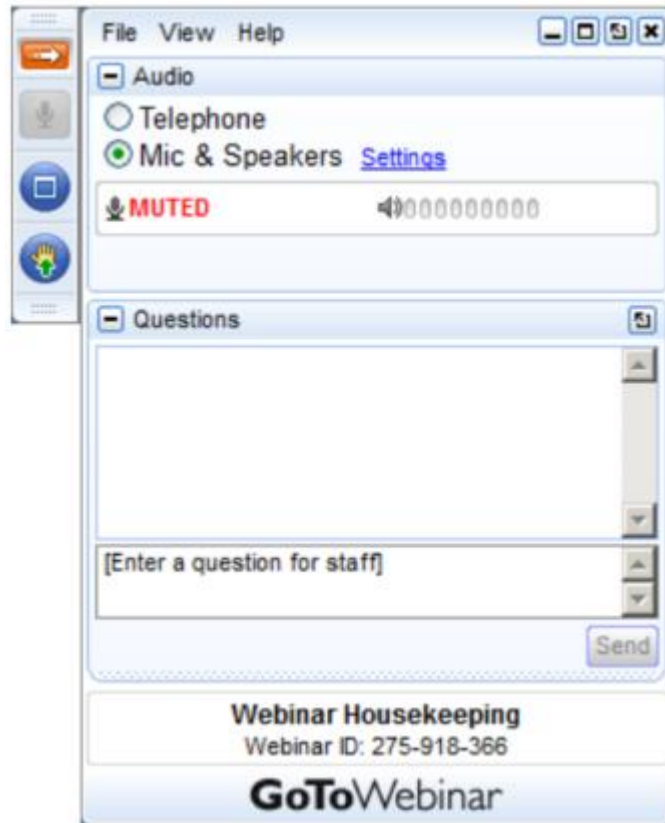
How COVID-19 is changing the noise landscape

Noise and compliance during COVID-19

Noise after COVID-19



GoToWebinar Housekeeping



- This is the **first** webinar in the series
- It will be recorded and uploaded to our website

GoToWebinar Housekeeping

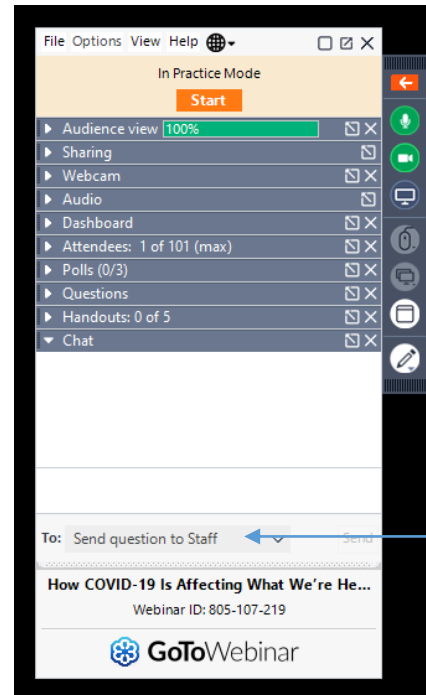
How to ask a question

1



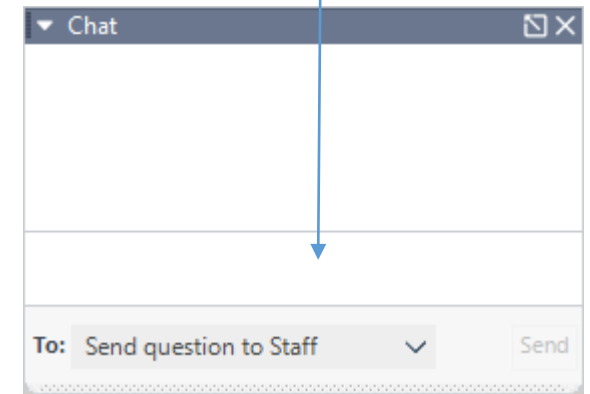
Open control panel

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Enter question



Select "Send question to Staff"

TOPIC 1

Noise Assessments During Social Distancing

- Are noise assessments still safe to be conducted and if so how?

The Problem – We must keep our social distance



- 1 - Remote monitoring equipment, personal dosimeters and free standing sound meters
- 2 - Changing the process to accommodate split shifts
- 3 - Hearing test requirements for stood down workers
- 4 - Advantages of conducting assessments during the COVID-19 period

Part 1 - Remote monitoring equipment, personal dosimeters and free standing sound meters

- Using higher capability personal monitoring **dosimeters**, which can reduce the need for completing assessments close to employees
- Utilising tripods to hold sound level meters to obtain measurements at operator positions while maintaining social distancing of **1.5m**.
- For sites operating at reduced capacities, simulating typical operating conditions and extrapolating data.



Part 2 - Changing the process to accommodate split shifts



- If the tasks performed by each split shift are **different**, conducting assessments over multiple days rather than a single day
- If the tasks performed by each split shift are the **same**, the results from one shift will be applicable to all shifts and only the one shift needs to be assessed

Part 3 - Hearing test requirements for stood down workers

- Most state OHS regulations state that any employee who is required to wear hearing protection as part of their work are required to have Audiometric testing:
 - Within **three months** following the commencement of employment
 - At any time when **reasonably** requested to do so by the health and safety representative of the designated work group
 - At least every **two** years
- Stood down employees are still considered employees in the eyes of the OHS regulations. The above requirements **still apply**



Part 4 - Advantages of conducting assessments during the COVID-19 period

- Manufacturing is still operating as normal for some businesses and others may still be operating but at reduced capacity
- Greater availability in booking dates and quicker turnaround times on reports
- No compromise in quality of assessments due to social distancing requirements



TOPIC 2

How COVID-19 is changing the noise landscape

- It's quiet... too quiet

The Problem – The new normal



- 1 - Managing increased complaints due to quieter ambient noise
- 2 - Noise limits and goals for construction projects
- 3 - Appropriate noise mitigation strategies
- 4 - The role of computer noise modelling

Part 1 - Managing increased complaints due to quieter ambient noise

- Noise sources will eventually go back to how they once were. However they won't all happen at the **same** time
- Possibilities of complaints are very **high** during the period after Covid-19.
- Community consultation about progress of mitigation measures can help a lot in some cases
- A complaints and noise management procedure should be implemented during projects to appropriately handle the **increased** likelihood of complaints

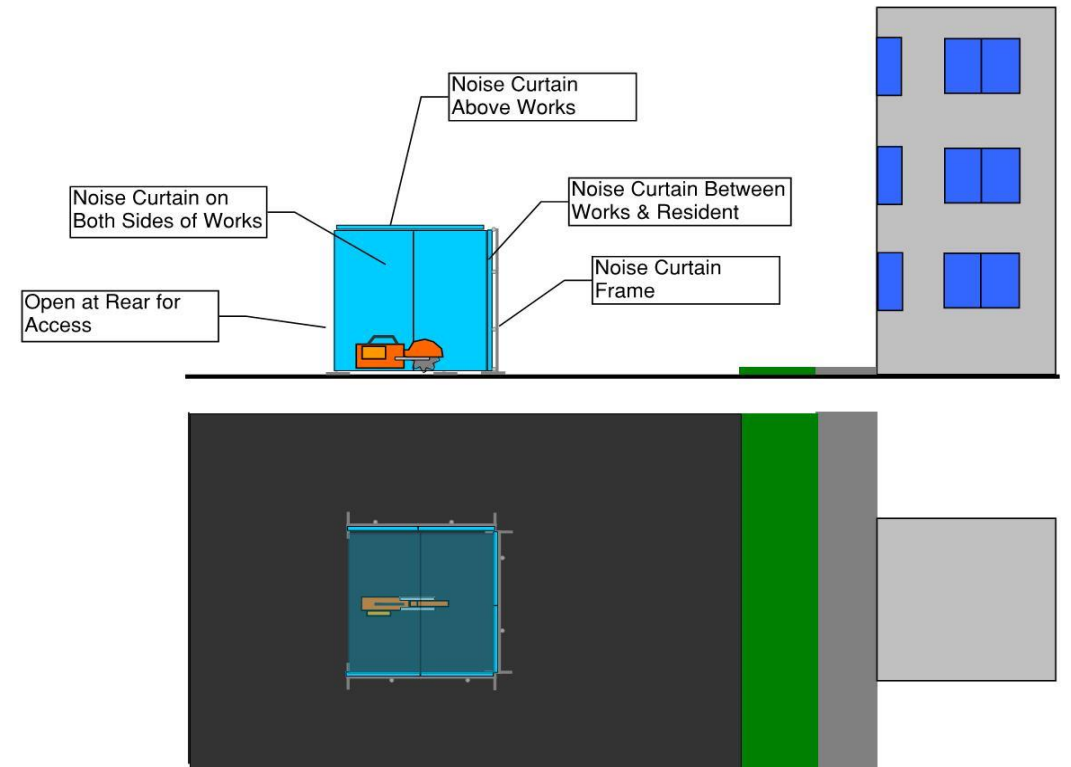
Part 2 - Noise limits and goals for construction projects

- Noise limits determined from background or ambient noise levels during Covid-19 social isolation are **not** representative of the typical case and should be adjusted or interpreted with care
- Short term projects that will start and be completed during the period should aspire to meet the potentially **more stringent** noise limit due to lower background or ambient noise levels
- Where possible, fixed noise limits that are **not** based on background or ambient noise levels should be suggested to be endorsed by the local authority for any permits



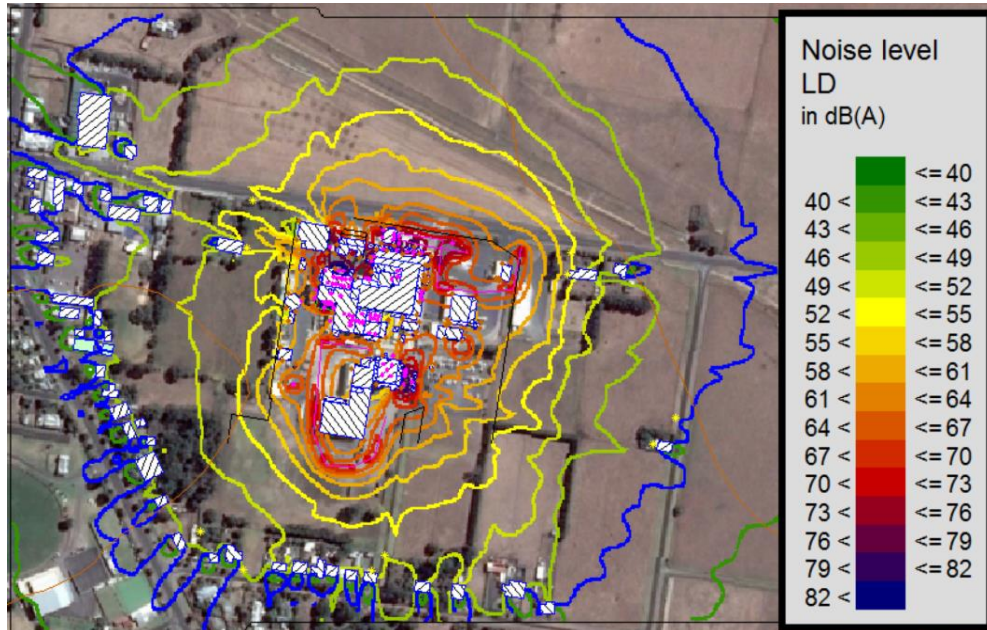
Part 3 - Appropriate noise mitigation strategies

- Equipment that may have been left idle for some time will potentially be a big noise problem. Eg. squealing fan belts, loose or semi-seized components
- Pre-empting and preventing these problems is key. Understanding if you are meeting policy noise limits will enable you to **act** accordingly
- Monitoring of noise/vibration levels during projects can let you know where you stand and **how much** mitigation works are required
- Limiting operating times



Part 4 - The role of computer noise modelling

- Knowing what noise source is going to be a problem and to what locations can be vital to **managing** noise emissions
- It allows control or mitigation measures to be implanted **before** they are a problem and generate complaints



- When done **accurately** it can enable clever planning of works to reduce noise impacts at residents
- It can **satisfy** responsible authorities of site noise management without the need for attended measurements
- Access to residential properties are not required to determine if they are impacted or not

TOPIC 3

Noise and compliance during COVID-19

- Where do you stand

The Problem – Have requirements changed



- 1 - What do the regulations and legislation actually say
- 2 - Your obligations for the next 6 months
- 3 - Is Work Safe still visiting sites and issuing fines

Part 1 - What do the regulations and legislation actually say

- There is no harmonisation of assessing environmental or construction noise across states, councils and the EPA. They all have **different** requirements.
- All occupational OHS regulations state that any employee who is exposed to noise levels in excess of the exposure standard require appropriate controls to manage the hazard. These limits are the **same** across the different states.
- Environmental noise policies will have a noise limit that is based on a combination of land zoning/population density and background noise levels
- Construction noise and vibrations levels are typically **set** noise level criteria unless the background noise level is very high or low

Part 2 - Your obligations for the next 6 months



- You are **still** required to provide a safe work place
- Your business will **still** fall under any environmental noise and vibration requirements
- **Some** relaxation has occurred for critical works, eg. extended operating hours for hospital construction works

Part 3 - Is Work Safe still visiting sites and issuing fines

- Worksafe are still **visiting** sites and conducting audits as normal
- JTA has been advised that during the Covid-19 period Worksafe still **expect compliance** with relevant legislation and regulations as normal
- Additionally further Covid-19 social distancing practices and policies are also being looked at



TOPIC 4

Noise after COVID-19

- Will it ever be normal again



The Problem – Adjusting to real life again



- 1 - What happens when its back to business as normal
- 2 - How to predict which activities are going to cause issues
- 3 - Implementing mitigation strategies to avoid community complaints
- 4 - Using current downtime to provide remote Noise Awareness Training

Part 1 - What happens when its back to business as normal

- The world is going to be a much **noisier** place than it is at the moment, and people will get used to the quieter lifestyle in the meantime
- It is anticipated that there will be a **boom** of works initially as businesses start operating at full capacity again and will be commissioning work to assist them getting back up and running
- An increased focus on local manufacturing will occur as people and governments want to **ensure** they have adequate responses and supplies for future events like this
- Possible red tape reduction to **kick-start** the economy



Part 2 - How to predict which activities are going to cause issues



- Identify any equipment that will sit **idle** for a long period that had rapid moving parts such as belts, fans, bearings, etc
- Test run processes **early** and keep in mind noise emissions to nearby residents as well as workers on the floor, noticing if they are higher than normal
- Continue maintenance schedules or temporarily decommission equipment to reduce chances of deterioration

Part 3 - Implementing mitigation strategies to avoid community complaints

- Test run equipment in the **day** time period to avoid awakening reactions
- Initially, maintenance of problem noise sources should be conducted to see if lubrication or parts replacement can **solve** the problem
- Community **consultation** of when noisy works are going to occur if they don't normally operate 24 hours per day
- Engineering controls to modify the equipment to **reduce** noise, or substituting it with a newer and quieter version



Part 4 - Using current downtime to provide remote Noise Awareness Training

- JTA will be providing a webinar in the future of one of our [noise awareness training](#) sessions as we feel it is a perfect opportunity to provide some essential training to our client's employees when people are working from home or have operational down time. It will cover the following:
 - An overview of noise
 - Anatomy of the ear
 - Hearing health and noise
 - Noise Induced Hearing Loss (NIHL) & tinnitus examples
 - Selection of hearing protectors & SLC ratings
 - Use and proper fitting of hearing protectors
 - Maintenance and storage of hearing protectors
 - Components of Occupational Noise Assessments
 - Noise control - Hierarchy of controls
 - Standards and current legislation
 - An overview of the site Noise Assessment results and noise control program



Thanks for listening



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