



Global standard for safe listening venues and events



What is safe listening?

Safe listening refers to a collection of habits and behaviours that allow you to enjoy music while lowering your risk of irreversible hearing damage. Safe listening can prevent hearing loss!

What is the global standard for safe listening venues and events?

WHO has developed a set of evidence-based recommendations to reduce the risk of hearing loss in people visiting entertainment venues and events. This is in response to the growing concern about hearing loss caused by loud sounds.

Six features make up the standard and they apply to venues such as nightclubs, discotheques, bars, concerts, and festivals.

Why is safe listening important for venues and events?



Hearing loss caused by loud sounds is permanent.

1.1 billion

young people are at risk of hearing loss because of unsafe listening practices.

40%

of people aged 12-35 in high- and middle-income countries are exposed to damaging sound levels in entertainment venues.

How can the safe listening standard be used for venues and events?

Governments

can develop legislation or regulations which are then monitored for compliance, alongside safe listening awareness campaigns.

Owners/managers of venues and events, industry associations

can adopt the standard and implement its features on a voluntary basis.

Educational institutions for musicians and acoustic engineers

can include a safe listening module focusing on the standard's need, rationale, benefits and features.

What are the benefits of implementing the safe listening standard at venues and events?

Governments

Hearing loss is a growing global public health issue. Its prevention will help reduce the need for hearing care, improve quality of life, and increase productivity.

Owners/managers of venues and events, industry associations

Respecting clients' hearing health and improving their listening experience makes good financial sense for an industry that relies on their capacity to hear.

Acousticians, engineers, musicians, event organizers, and others

It will reduce the danger of hearing damage in both the audiences and those working at such venues and events.

Six features of the safe listening standard for venues or events

1. Limiting sound levels

A maximum limit of 100dB L_{Aeq 15 minutes}* is imposed, keeping sound safe and enjoyable for the audience.



2. Monitoring sound levels

Live monitoring and recording of sound levels using calibrated measurement equipment by designated staff members.



3. Optimizing venue acoustics and sound systems

The sound system and venue acoustics should be optimized to ensure enjoyable sound quality and safe listening levels for all.



4. Making personal hearing protection available

Hearing protection such as earplugs should be available to audience members, with instructions.



5. Access to quiet zone(s)

Quiet zones allow members of the audience the opportunity to rest their ears and decrease the risk of hearing damage.



6. Provision of training and information

Staff and audience members should be informed about practical steps they can take to ensure safe listening.



*L_{Aeq 15 minutes} is the measured average sound level over fifteen minutes.

What can you do to promote safe listening at venues and events?

Civil society can play a pivotal role in raising awareness of the safe listening standard and advocating for its implementation among governments, owners/managers of venues and events, and the staff working at such venues and events.

To hear for life, listen with care! Make listening safe

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For more details refer to: <https://www.who.int/health-topics/hearing-loss>