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Protective Noise Levels

Condensed Version of EPA Levels Document



PURPOSE

This publication is intended to complement the EPA's "Levels Document,"* the 1974 report examining levels of environmental noise necessary to protect public health and welfare. It interprets the contents of the Levels Document in less technical terms for people who wish to better understand the concepts presented there, and how the protective levels were identified. In that sense, this publication may serve as an introduction, or a supplement, to the Levels Document.

*"Information on Levels of Environmental Noise Requisite to Protect Public Health and Welfare with an Adequate Margin of Safety," EPA/ONAC 550/9-74-004, March, 1974.

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INTRODUCTION

During the last 20 years there has been increasing concern with the quality of the environment. Along with air and water contaminants, noise has been recognized as a serious pollutant. As noise levels have risen, the effects of noise have become pervasive and more apparent.

Noise is defined as "unwanted sound." In the context of protecting the public health and welfare, noise implies adverse effects on people and the environment. Noise causes hearing loss, interferes with human activities at home and work, and is in various ways injurious to people's health and well-being. Although hearing loss is the most clearly measurable health hazard, noise is also linked to other physiological and psychological problems.

Noise annoys, awakens, angers and frustrates people. It disrupts communication and individual thoughts, and affects performance capability. Noise is one of the biological stressors associated with everyday life. Thus, the numerous effects of noise combine to detract from the quality of people's lives and the environment.

Noise emanates from many different sources. Transportation noise, industrial noise, construction noise, household noise, and people and animal noise are all large-scale offenders. It is important, then, to examine the total range and combination of noise sources and not to focus unduly on any one source.

Through the Noise Control Act of 1972, Congress directed the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) to publish scientific information about the kind and extent of all identifiable effects of different qualities and quantities of noise. EPA was also directed to define acceptable levels under various conditions which would protect public health and welfare with an adequate margin of safety. The EPA collaborated with other Federal agencies and the scientific community to publish a "Levels Document,"* which would fulfill these requirements in the Noise Control Act.

Initial public reaction was quite favorable, but it was discovered that the document was too complex, too technical, and too long for some audiences. This summary presents the contents of the Levels Document in less technical terms. It defines the basic measurement of noise, analyzes noise exposure, and presents the best understood effects of noise — hearing damage, speech interference, and annoyance — using information contained in the Levels Document. The identified protective levels are then summarized, followed by a number of often-asked questions and answers about the Levels Document.

No attempt has been made here to incorporate recent research findings pertaining to effects of noise on people. Considerable new information has developed since initial publication of the Levels Document, including new findings on community response to noise, sleep disruption, and speech interference. Summaries and analyses of some recent information on noise effects are available through EPA and other agencies.

* "Information on Levels of Environmental Noise Requisite to Protect Public Health and Welfare with an Adequate Margin of Safety", EPA 550/9-74-004, March, 1974, U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, Washington, D.C. 20460.

ABOUT SOUND

The sound we hear is the result of a sound source inducing vibration in the air. The vibration produces alternating band of relatively dense and sparse particles of air, spreading outward from the source in the same way as ripples do on water after a stone is thrown into it. The result of the movement of the particles is a fluctuation in the normal atmospheric pressure, or sound waves. These waves radiate in all directions from the source and may be reflected and scattered or, like other wave actions, may turn corners. When the source stops vibrating, the sound waves disappear almost instantaneously, and the sound ceases. The ear is extremely sensitive to sound pressure fluctuations, which are converted into auditory sensations.

Sound may be described in terms of three variables:

1. Amplitude (perceived as loudness)
2. Frequency (perceived as pitch)
3. Time pattern

Amplitude

Sound pressure is the amplitude or measure of the difference between atmospheric pressure (with no sound present) and the total pressure (with sound present). Although there are other measures of sound amplitude, sound pressure is the fundamental measure and is the basic ingredient of the various measurement descriptors in the next section, "Measurement of Environmental Noise."

The unit of sound pressure is the decibel (dB); thus it is said that a sound pressure level is a certain number of decibels. The decibel scale is a logarithmic scale, not a linear one such as the scale of length. A logarithmic scale is used because the range of sound intensities is so great that it is convenient to compress the scale to encompass all the sounds that need to be measured. The human ear has an extremely wide range of response to sound amplitude. Sharply painful sound is 10 million times greater in sound pressure than the least audible sound. In decibels, this 10 million to 1 ratio is simplified logarithmically to 140 dB.

Another unusual property of the decibel scale is that the sound pressure levels of two separate sounds are not directly (that is, arithmetically) additive. For example, if a sound of 70 dB is added to another sound of 70 dB, the total is only a 3-decibel increase (to 73 dB), not a doubling to 140 dB. Furthermore, if two sounds are of different levels, the lower level adds less to the higher as this difference increases. If the difference is as much as 10 dB, the lower level adds almost nothing to the higher level. In other words, adding a 60 decibel sound to a 70 decibel sound only increases the total sound pressure level less than one-half decibel.

Frequency

The rate at which a sound source vibrates, or makes the air vibrate, determines frequency. The unit of time is usually one second and the term "Hertz" (after an early investigator of the physics of sound) is used to designate the number of cycles per second.

The human ear and that of most animals has a wide range of response. Humans can identify sounds with frequencies from about 16 Hz (Hertz) to 20,000 Hz. Because pure tones are relatively rare in real-life situations, most sounds consist instead of a complex mixture of many frequencies.

Time Pattern

The temporal nature of sound may be described in terms of its pattern of time and level: continuity, fluctuation, impulsiveness, intermittency. Continuous sounds are those produced for relatively long periods at a constant level, such as the noise of a waterfall. Intermittent sounds are those which are produced for short periods, such as the ringing of a telephone or aircraft take-offs and landings. Impulse noises are sounds which are produced in an extremely short span of time, such as a pistol shot or a hand clap. Fluctuating sounds vary in level over time, such as the loudness of traffic sounds at a busy intersection.

MEASUREMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL NOISE: SOUND DESCRIPTORS

EPA has adopted a system of four "sound descriptors" to summarize how people hear sound and to determine the impact of environmental noise on public health and welfare. These four descriptors are: the A-weighted Sound Level, A-weighted Sound Exposure Level, Equivalent Sound Level, and Day-Night

Sound Level. They are related but each is most useful for a particular type of measurement. The descriptors and some examples of their uses are described below.

A-weighted Sound Level

One's ability to hear a sound depends greatly on the frequency composition of the sound. People hear sounds most readily when the predominant sound energy occurs at frequencies between 1000 and 6000 Hertz (cycles per second). Sounds at frequencies above 10,000 Hertz (such as high-pitched hissing) are much more difficult to hear, as are sounds at frequencies below about 100 Hz (such as a low rumble). To measure sound on a scale that approximates the way it is heard by people, more weight must be given to the frequencies that people hear more easily.

A method for weighting the frequency spectrum to mimic the human ear has been sought for years. Many different scales of sound measurement, including A-weighted sound level (and also B, C, D, and E-weighted sound levels) have evolved in this search. A-weighting was recommended by EPA to describe environmental noise because it is convenient to use, accurate for most purposes, and is used extensively throughout the world. Figure 1 shows the A-weighted levels of some environmental noises. Note that these ranges of measured values are the maximum sound levels.

The A-weighting of frequency also is used in the three descriptors discussed below. When used by itself, an A-weighted decibel value denotes either a sound level at a given instant, a maximum level, or a steady-state level. The following three descriptors are used to summarize those levels which vary over time.

Sound Exposure Level

Since the levels of many sounds change from moment to moment, this variation must also be accounted for when measuring environmental noise. One method for measuring the changing magnitude of sound levels is to trace a line on a sheet of moving paper, so that the movement of the pen is proportional to the sound level in decibels. Figure 2 illustrates such a recording, about which several features are noteworthy. First, the sound level varies with time over a range of about 30 dB. Second, the sound appears to be characterized by a fairly steady-state lower level, upon which are superimposed sound levels associated with individual events. This fairly constant lower level is often called the background ambient sound level.

Each single event in Figure 2 may be partially characterized by its maximum level. It may also be partially characterized by its time pattern. In the example, the sound level of the aircraft is above that of the background ambient level for about a minute, whereas the sound levels from cars are above the background level for much less time.

The duration of sounds with levels that vary from moment to moment is more difficult to characterize. One way is to combine the maximum sound level with the length of time during which the sound level is greater than a certain number of decibels below the maximum level — for example, the number of seconds that the sound rises from 10 dB below maximum, as in Figure 3.

Using this procedure one can measure the total energy of the sound by summing the intensity during the exposure duration. This procedure produces the second measurement descriptor, *sound exposure level* (L_s), referred to in the Levels Document as the single event noise exposure level (SENEL).

Equivalent Sound Level

Yet another method of quantifying the noise environment is to determine the value of a steady-state sound which has the same A-weighted sound energy as that contained in the time-varying sound. This is the third measurement descriptor, termed the *Equivalent Sound Level* (L_{eq}). The Equivalent Sound Level is a single value of sound level for any desired duration, which includes *all* of the time-varying sound energy in the measurement period. In Figure 2, for example, the L_{eq} equals about 58 dB, indicating that the amount of sound energy in all the peaks and valleys in the figure is equivalent to the energy in a continuous sound of 58 dB.

The major virtue of the Equivalent Sound Level is that it correlates reasonably well with the effects of noise on people, even for wide variations in environmental sound levels and time patterns. It is used when only the durations and levels of sound, and not their times of occurrence (day or night), are relevant. It is easily measurable by available equipment. It also is the basis of a fourth and final measurement descriptor of the total outdoor noise environment, the *Day-Night Sound Level* (L_{dn}).

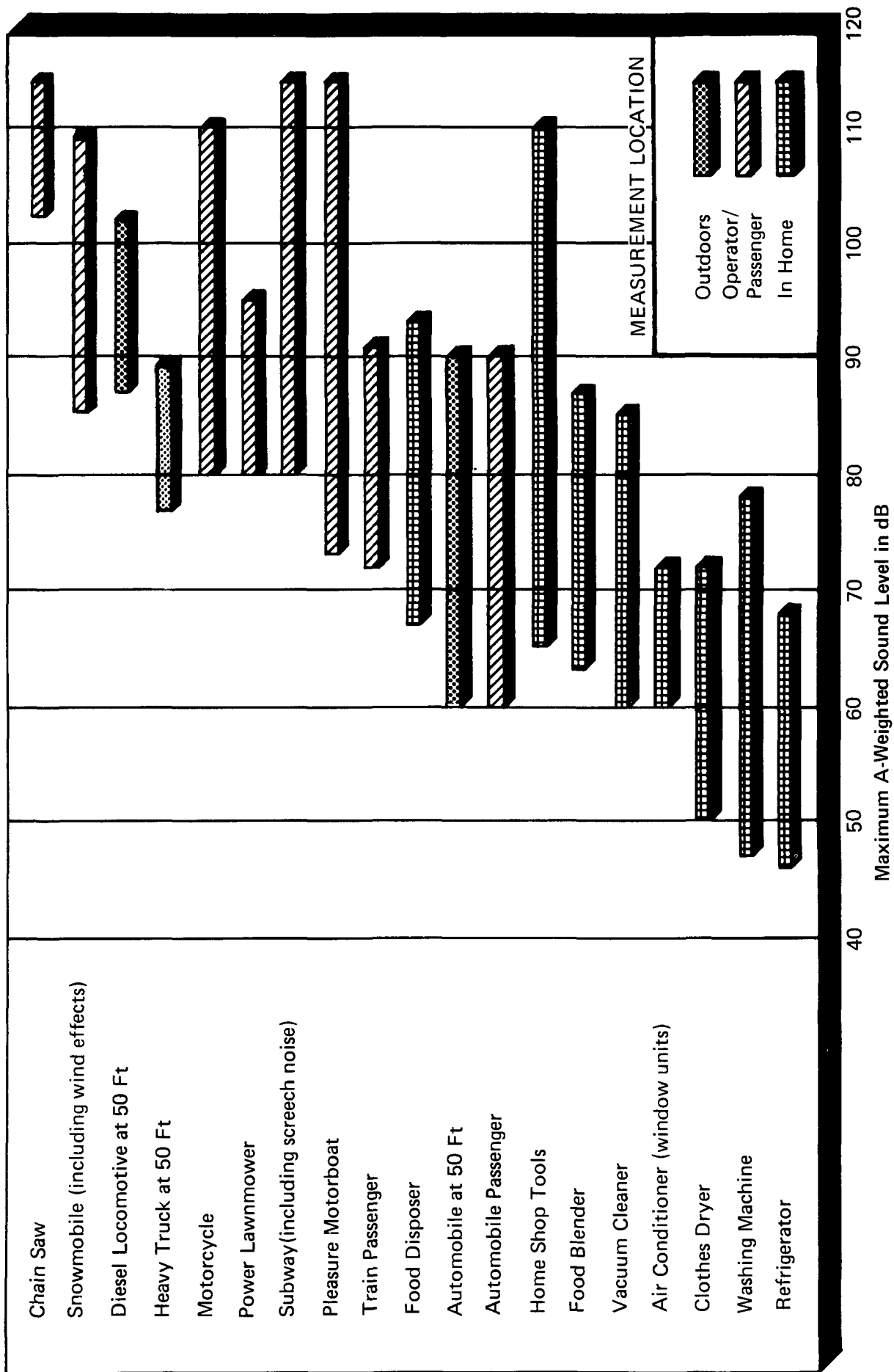


FIGURE 1. TYPICAL RANGE OF COMMON SOUNDS

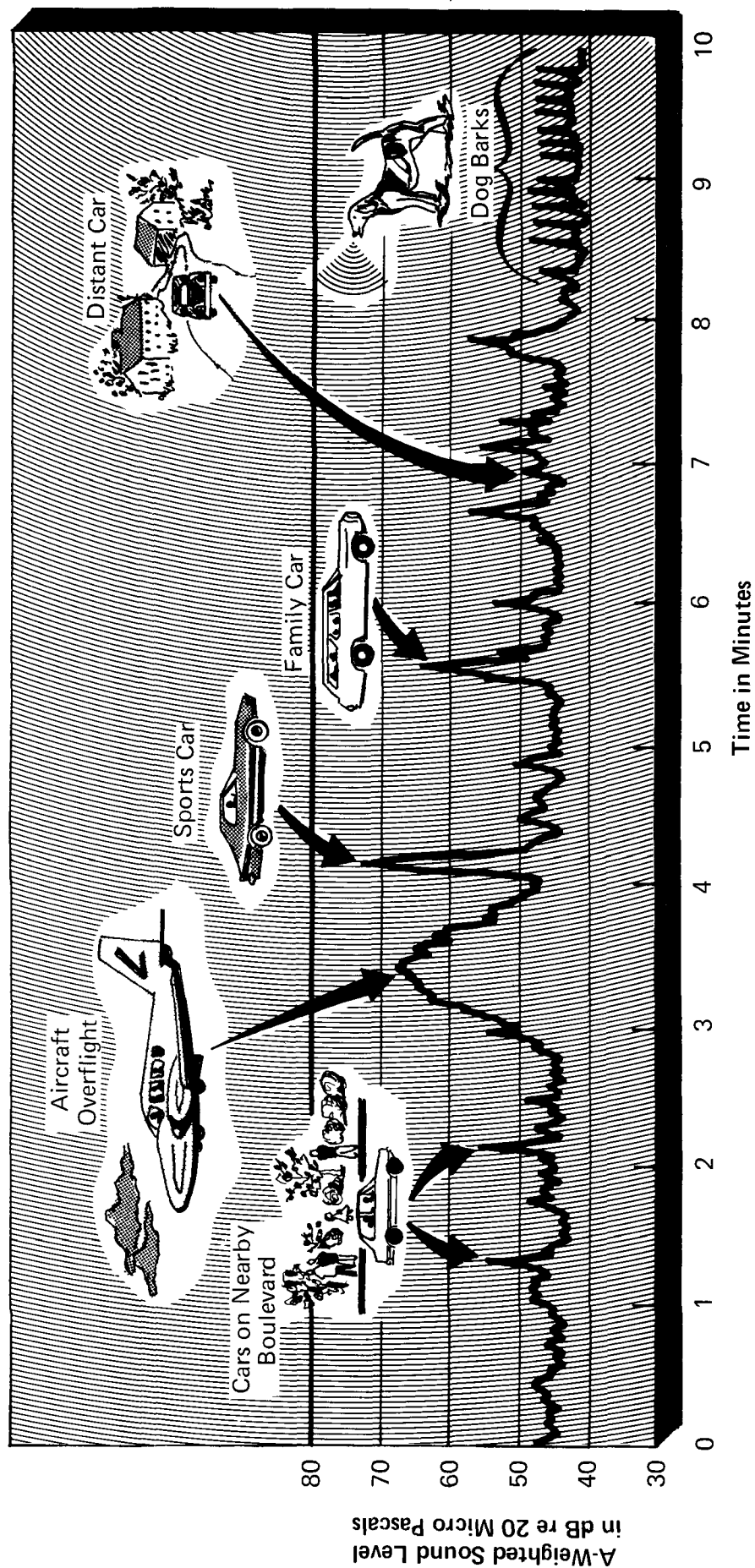


FIGURE 2. TYPICAL OUTDOOR SOUND MEASURED ON A QUIET SUBURBAN STREET

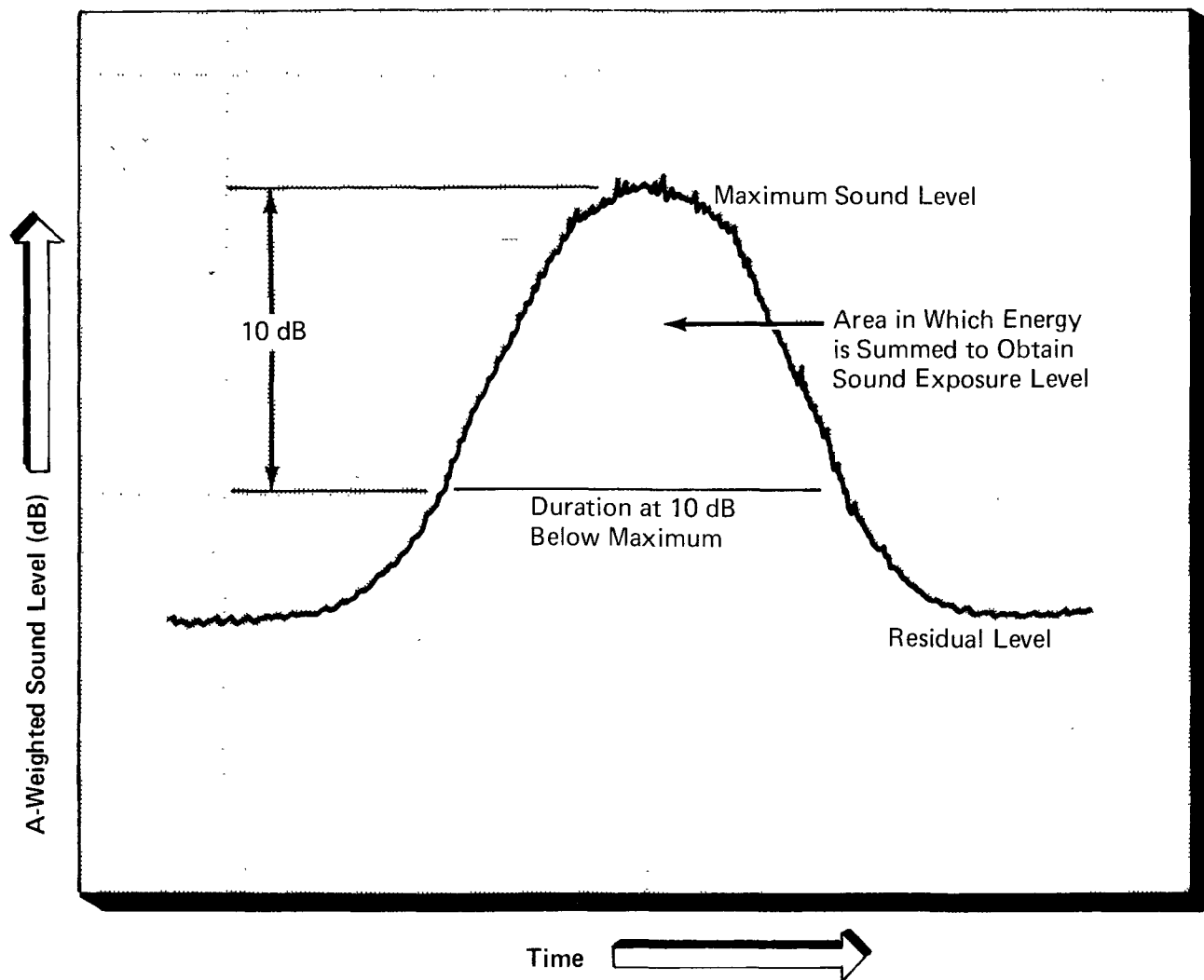


FIGURE 3. DESCRIPTION OF THE SOUND OF A SINGLE EVENT

L_{dn} in dB

Outdoor Location

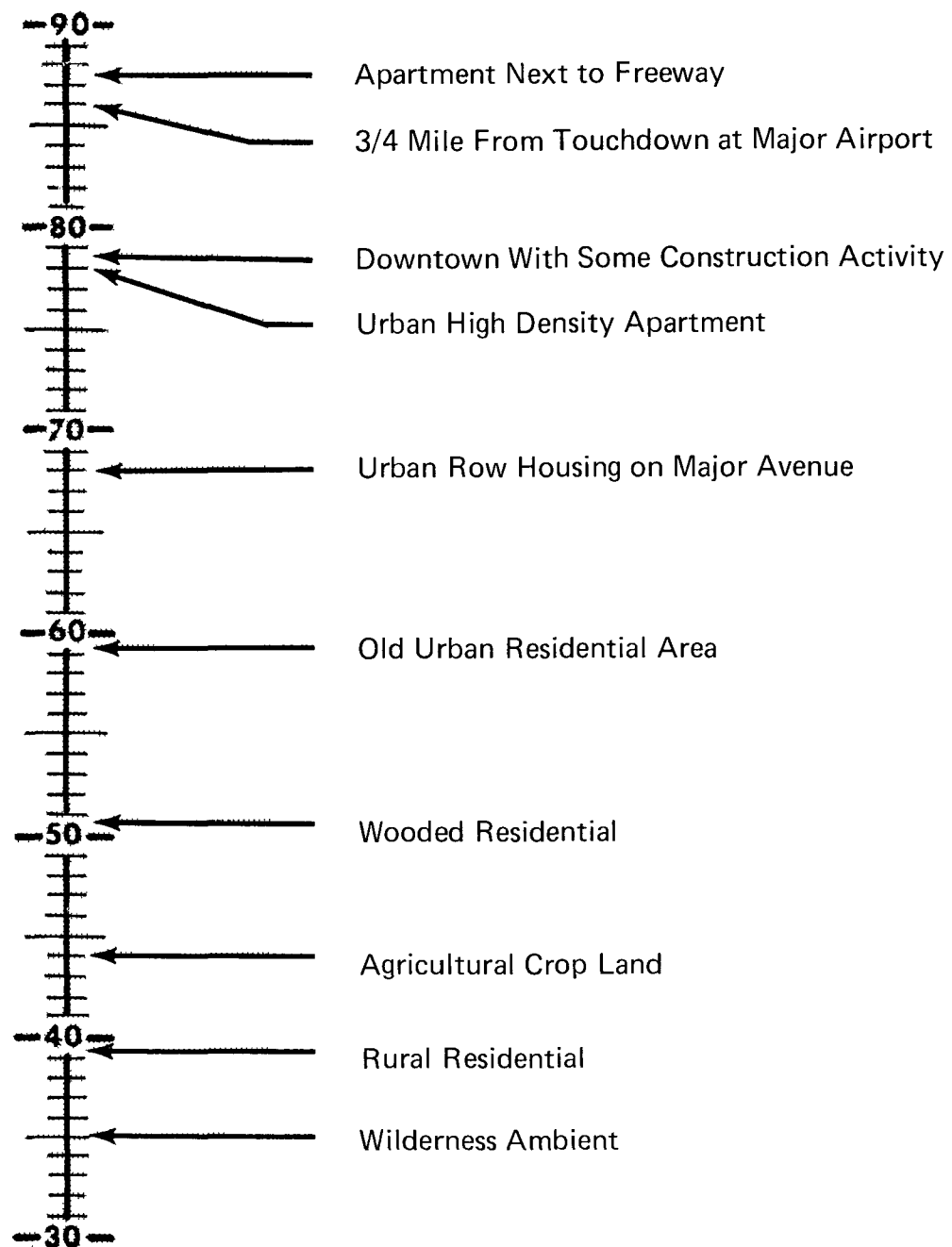


FIGURE 4. EXAMPLES OF OUTDOOR DAY-NIGHT AVERAGE SOUND LEVELS IN dB MEASURED AT VARIOUS LOCATIONS

Day-Night Sound Level

The Day-Night Sound Level is the A-weighted equivalent sound level for a 24-hour period with an additional 10 dB weighting imposed on the equivalent sound levels occurring during nighttime hours (10 pm to 7 am). Hence, an environment that has a measured daytime equivalent sound level of 60 dB and a measured nighttime equivalent sound level of 50 dB, can be said to have a weighted nighttime sound level of 60 dB ($50 + 10$) and an L_{dn} of 60 dB. Examples of measured L_{dn} values are shown in Figure 4. Table I summarizes the use of the four sound descriptors used by EPA.

Table I. Descriptors of Sound*

TYPICAL USE	NAME OF DESCRIPTOR	NATURE OF DESCRIPTOR
To describe steady airconditioning sound in a room or measure maximum sound level during a vehicle passby with a simple sound level meter.	A-weighted Sound Level	The momentary magnitude of sound weighted to approximate the ear's frequency sensitivity.
To describe noise from a moving source such as an airplane, train, or truck.	A-weighted Sound Exposure Level	A summation of the energy of the momentary magnitudes of sound associated with a single event to measure the total sound energy of the event.
To measure average environmental noise levels to which people are exposed.	Equivalent Sound Level	The A-weighted sound level that is "equivalent" to an actual time varying sound level, in the sense that it has the same total energy for the duration of the sound.
To characterize average sound levels in residential areas throughout the day and night.	Day-Night Sound Level	The A-weighted equivalent sound level for a 24-hour period with 10 decibels added to nighttime sounds (10 pm - 7 am).

*The unit for all descriptors is the decibel.

LEVELS OF ENVIRONMENTAL NOISE IN THE UNITED STATES

In residential areas of the United States, major contributions to outdoor noise come from transportation, industrial, construction, human and animal sources. Inside homes, appliances, radio and television, as well as people and animals, are predominant noise sources. On the job, workplace equipment can create moderate to extremely high levels of noise. The daily noise exposure of people depends on how much time they spend in different outdoor and indoor locations and on the noise environments in these places. Typical daily exposure patterns are discussed in this section, following short descriptions of outdoor and indoor levels of environmental noise throughout the United States.

Outdoor Levels

The noise environment outside residences in the United States can be highly variable. As seen in Figure 4, outdoor Day-Night Sound Levels in different areas vary over a range of 50 dB. Levels occur as low as $L_{dn} = 30$ to 40 dB in wilderness areas and as high as $L_{dn} = 85$ to 90 dB in urban areas.

Most Americans live in areas with a much smaller range of outdoor noise levels. Figure 5 shows that for urban dwellers (roughly 135 million people, more than half the U.S. population), 87% live in areas of $L_{dn} = 48$ and higher from traffic noise alone. Most of the other 13% of the urban population experience lower noise levels than those of Figure 5. Figure 5 also shows that nearly half of the urban population live in areas exposed to traffic sounds that range over only 5 dB ($L_{dn} = 55$ to 60 dB). Rural populations enjoy average outdoor sound levels generally lower than $L_{dn} = 50$ dB.

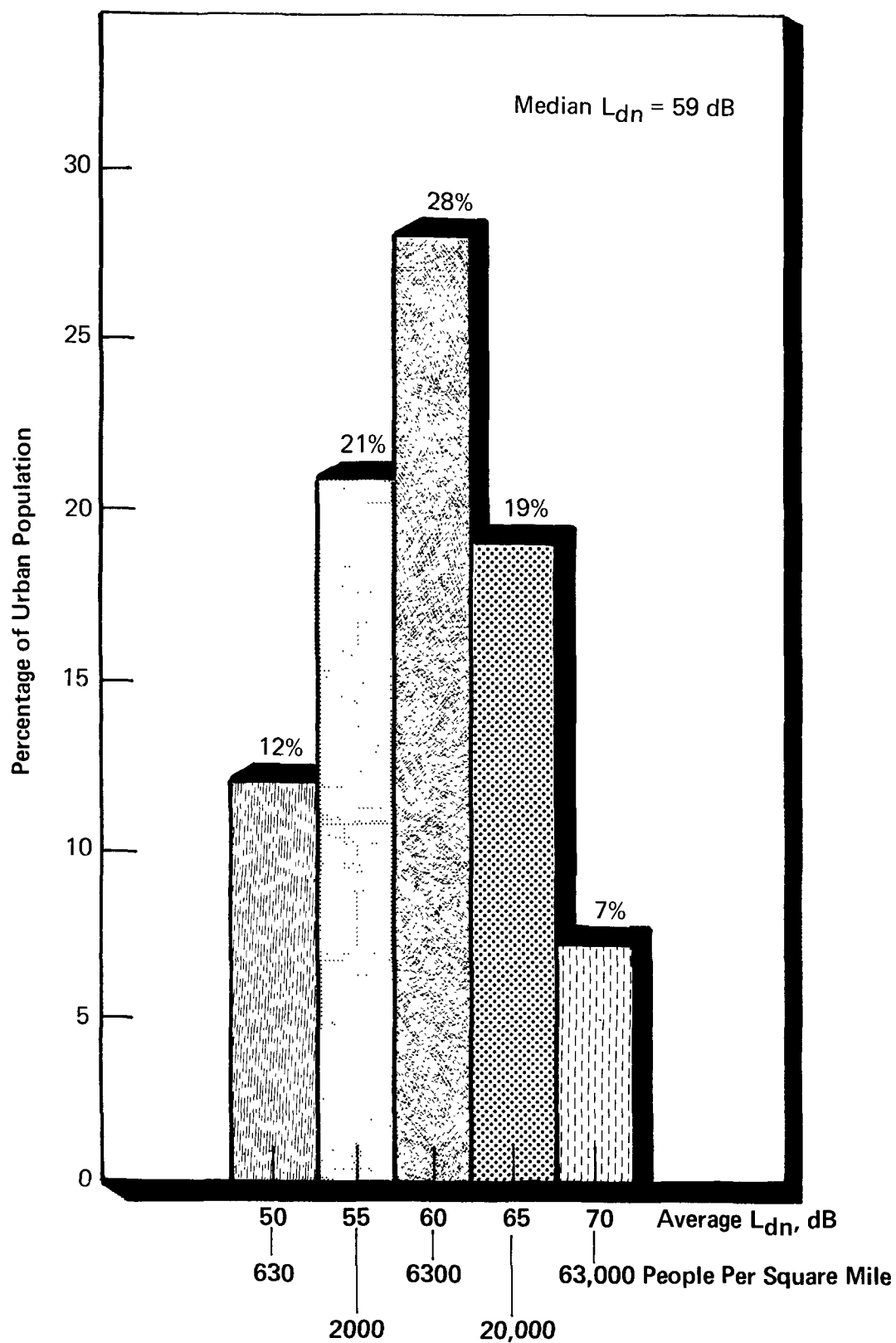


FIGURE 5. ESTIMATED PERCENTAGE OF URBAN POPULATION EXPOSED TO OUTDOOR DAY-NIGHT SOUND LEVELS DUE TO TRAFFIC

It is useful to know the number of people living in areas characterized by different levels of environmental noise. Figure 6 presents estimates for urban traffic, freeway traffic, and aircraft noise. The figure shows that urban traffic noise is much more widespread than either aircraft or freeway noise, but the figures are not strictly additive, because many of the people counted in one category are also exposed to another category of noise. Fifty-nine million people live in areas with urban traffic noise of $L_{dn} = 60$ dB or higher, in contrast to only 16 million and 3.1 million people who live in areas with outdoor levels of $L_{dn} = 60$ dB or higher for aircraft and freeway noise, respectively. On the other hand, more people are exposed to higher levels of noise from freeway and aircraft operations than from urban traffic: about 300,000 people live in areas exposed to levels of $L_{dn} = 80$ dB or higher from freeway traffic; 200,000 from aircraft operations; and 100,000 from urban traffic. Bear in mind, however, that there may be differences between individual at-ear exposure levels and outdoor levels, because people move from place to place for varying amounts of time.

Relationship Between Indoor and Outdoor Levels

The contribution of outdoor noise to indoor noise levels is usually small. That part of a sound level within a building caused by an outdoor source obviously depends on the source's intensity and the sound level reduction afforded by the building. Although the sound level reduction provided by different buildings differs greatly, dwellings can be categorized into two broad classes—those built in warm climates and those built in cold climates. Further, the sound level reduction of a building is largely determined by whether its windows are open or closed. Table II shows typical sound level reductions for these categories of buildings and window conditions, as well as an approximate national average sound level reduction.

Table II
Typical Sound Level Reductions of Buildings

	Windows Opened	Windows Closed
Warm Climate	12 dB	24 dB
Cold Climate	17 dB	27 dB
Approximate National Average	15 dB	25 dB

Sample measurements of outdoor and indoor noise levels during 24-hour periods are depicted in Figure 7. Despite the sound level reduction of buildings, indoor levels are often comparable to or higher than levels measured outside. Thus, indoor levels often are influenced primarily by internal noise sources such as appliances, radio and television, heating and ventilating equipment, and people. However, many outdoor noises may still annoy people in their homes more than indoor noises do. Indeed, people sometimes turn on indoor sources to mask the noise coming from outdoors.

An example of the range of hourly sound levels measured inside living areas is plotted for each hour of the day in Figure 8. The figure shows the median levels and the range of levels observed for 80% of the data. During late night hours the typical hourly sound level was approximately 36 dB. This level was probably dominated by outdoor noise. However, during the day, the hourly average levels ranged from about 40 to 70 dB, indicating the wide range of activities in which people engage.

INDIVIDUAL NOISE EXPOSURE PATTERNS

During a 24-hour period, people are exposed to a wide range of noises, including noise at home, work, school, places of recreation, shopping establishments, and while enroute to these or other locations. Clearly, no single exposure pattern can be typical of all people, or even of those people who follow a common life style. Figure 9 shows hypothetical exposure patterns for broad classes of people. From these levels and some assumptions about the hours spent at different daytime activities, 24-hour average sound levels can be estimated for factory and office workers, housewives, and preschool and school-age children. Estimates based on these assumptions are found in Table III.

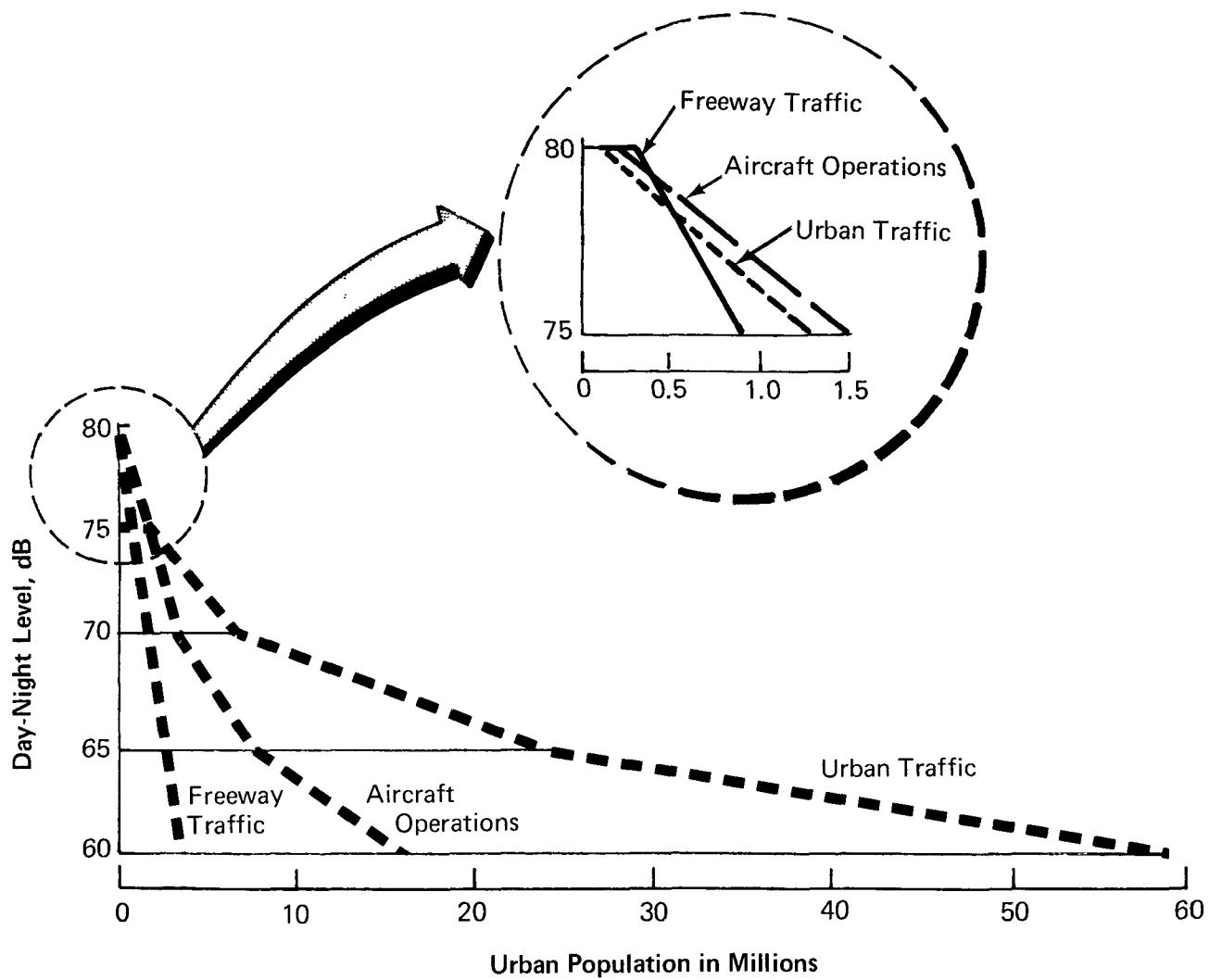


FIGURE 6. CUMULATIVE NUMBER OF PEOPLE IN URBAN AREAS EXPOSED TO OUTDOOR DAY-NIGHT AVERAGE SOUND LEVELS FROM DIFFERENT SOURCES

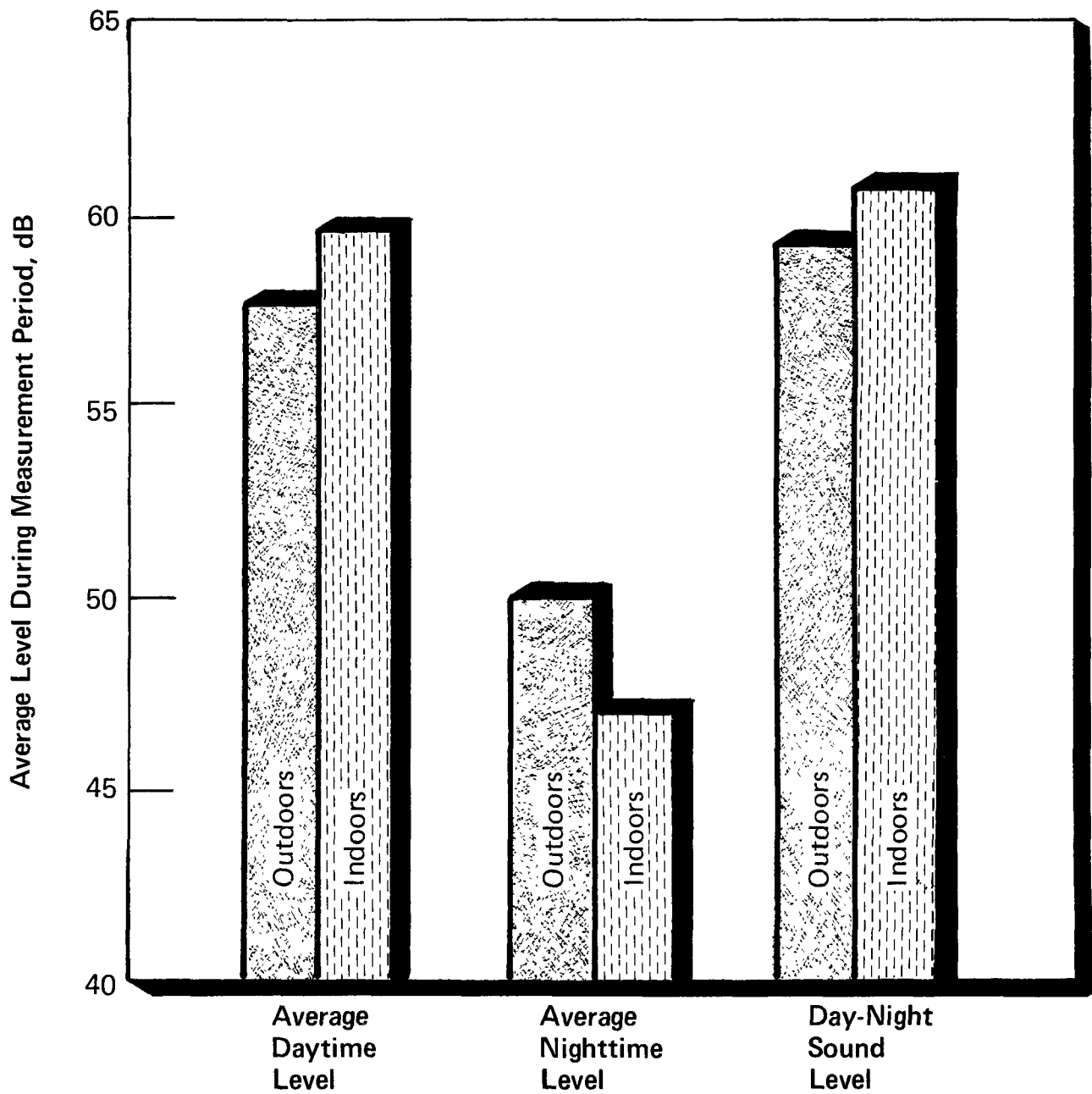


FIGURE 7. COMPARISON OF SAMPLE OUTDOOR AND INDOOR AVERAGE RESIDENTIAL SOUND LEVELS

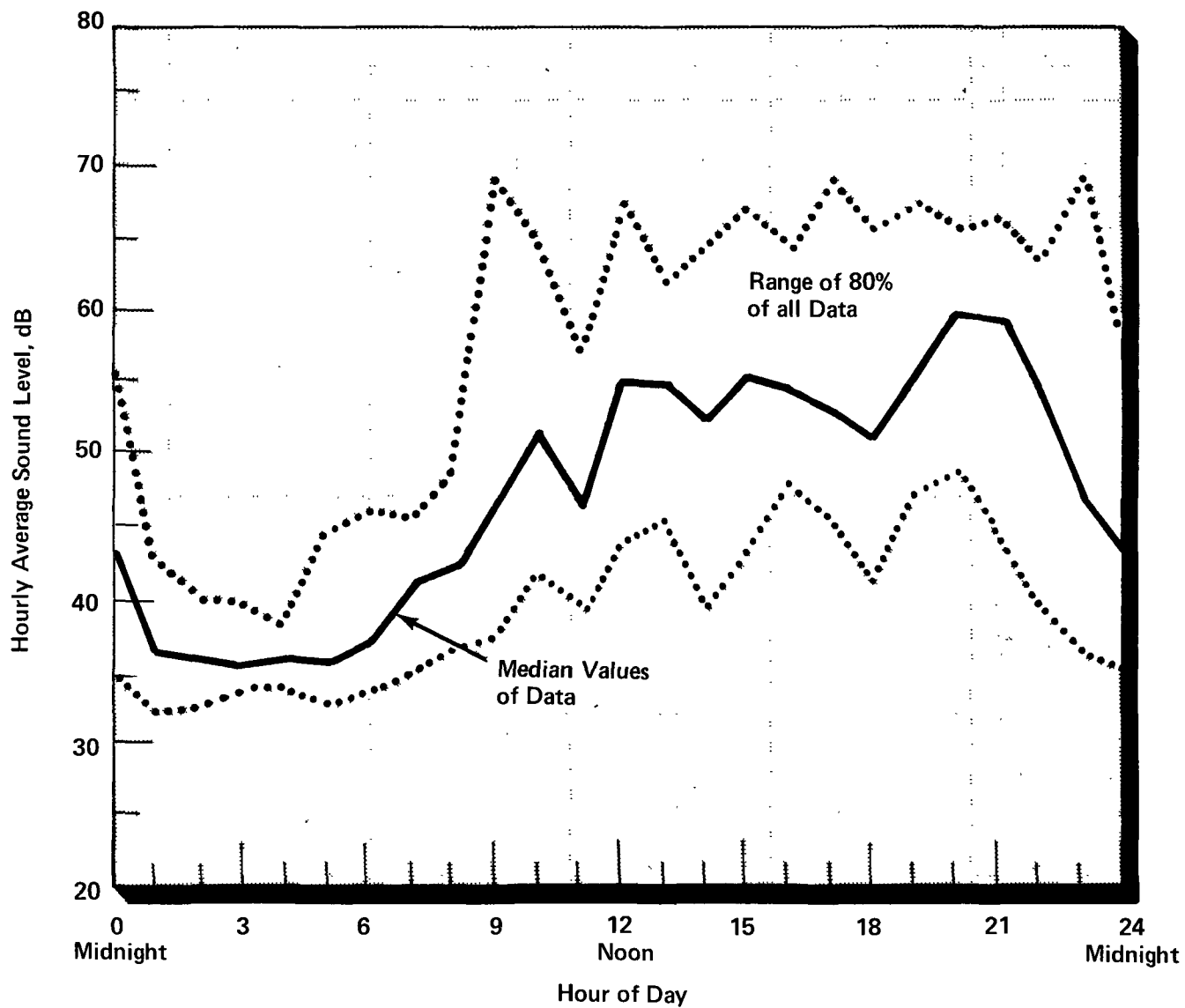


FIGURE 8. TIME PATTERN OF HOURLY INDOOR RESIDENTIAL SOUND LEVELS

For most people, nighttime noises do not contribute significantly to the 24-hour average. For many, the 24-hour average is determined primarily by the noise exposure of a single activity, frequently occurring for a short period of time.

Table III
Hypothetical Examples of Noise Exposures of Individuals

Individual	24-Hour Average Sound Level, dB	
	Suburban Environment	Urban Environment
Factory Worker	87	87
Office Worker	72	70
Housewife	64	67
School Child	77	77

HEARING DAMAGE FROM ENVIRONMENTAL NOISE

There is no question that exposure to certain levels of noise can damage hearing. However, determining exposure levels that protect hearing with an adequate margin of safety is a complicated matter.

This is because hearing is a complex ability that cannot be summarized by a single number in the way an individual's height or weight can be described. In fact, sizeable differences exist between individuals' hearing abilities. Hearing acuity tends to change progressively with age. Also, environmental noise exposure may vary considerably from moment to moment, so that specification of protective levels should include dynamic considerations. Further, relationships between hearing damage and noise exposure must be inferred, since available scientific information was gathered from groups of people who differed not only in noise exposure, but also in other important ways. Finally, individual and group noise exposures (especially over a working lifetime) are rarely known with precision.

In reaching conclusions about hearing loss, then, one must rely to a degree on assumptions, hypotheses, and extrapolations from existing data. Since complete agreement within the scientific community on these matters is lacking, an attempt was made in the Levels Document to consider alternative assumptions and hypotheses to ensure that the methods used to derive protective levels were based on the most defensible practice. As new data become available these levels may change slightly.

Basic Premises Involved in Determining Protective Levels

1. Changes in ability to hear in the region of 4000 Hz are the most important signs of irreversible hearing loss, indicating actual physiological destruction within the hearing mechanism. This frequency is usually the first frequency affected when the ear is damaged by exposure to noise. Furthermore, the protection of hearing acuity at this frequency is critical for understanding of speech and appreciation of music and other sounds.

2. Changes in individual hearing level, like changes in height or weight, are only significant if they are sizeable. Changes smaller than 5 dB are considered insignificant.

3. At all ages, it is assumed that hearing acuity cannot be damaged by sounds that cannot be heard. This may be important in that aging and other causes may produce appreciable shifts in hearing.

4. Because hearing ability varies from person to person, recommendations must be made in terms of a critical percentage of the population, ranked with superior hearing over the remainder. EPA's recommendations were based on the 96th percentile—that is, on providing protection for 96% of the people. It is assumed that people with poorer hearing than the 96th percentile are not affected by noise of typical levels (see 3 above), so that the recommendations protect virtually the entire population.

5. An individual's total noise exposure is evaluated by an "equal energy" rule: two noise exposures are expected to produce equal hearing loss if the product of exposure intensity and exposure time are equal. This rule allows a 3-dB decrease in sound pressure level (expressed in dB) for each doubling of the duration. Thus an exposure of 76 dB for one hour is equivalent to 73 dB for two hours, or 70 dB for four hours. This procedure is probably accurate for exposures of 30 minutes or more. It is also more protective for very short exposures and for noise that fluctuates greatly in level.

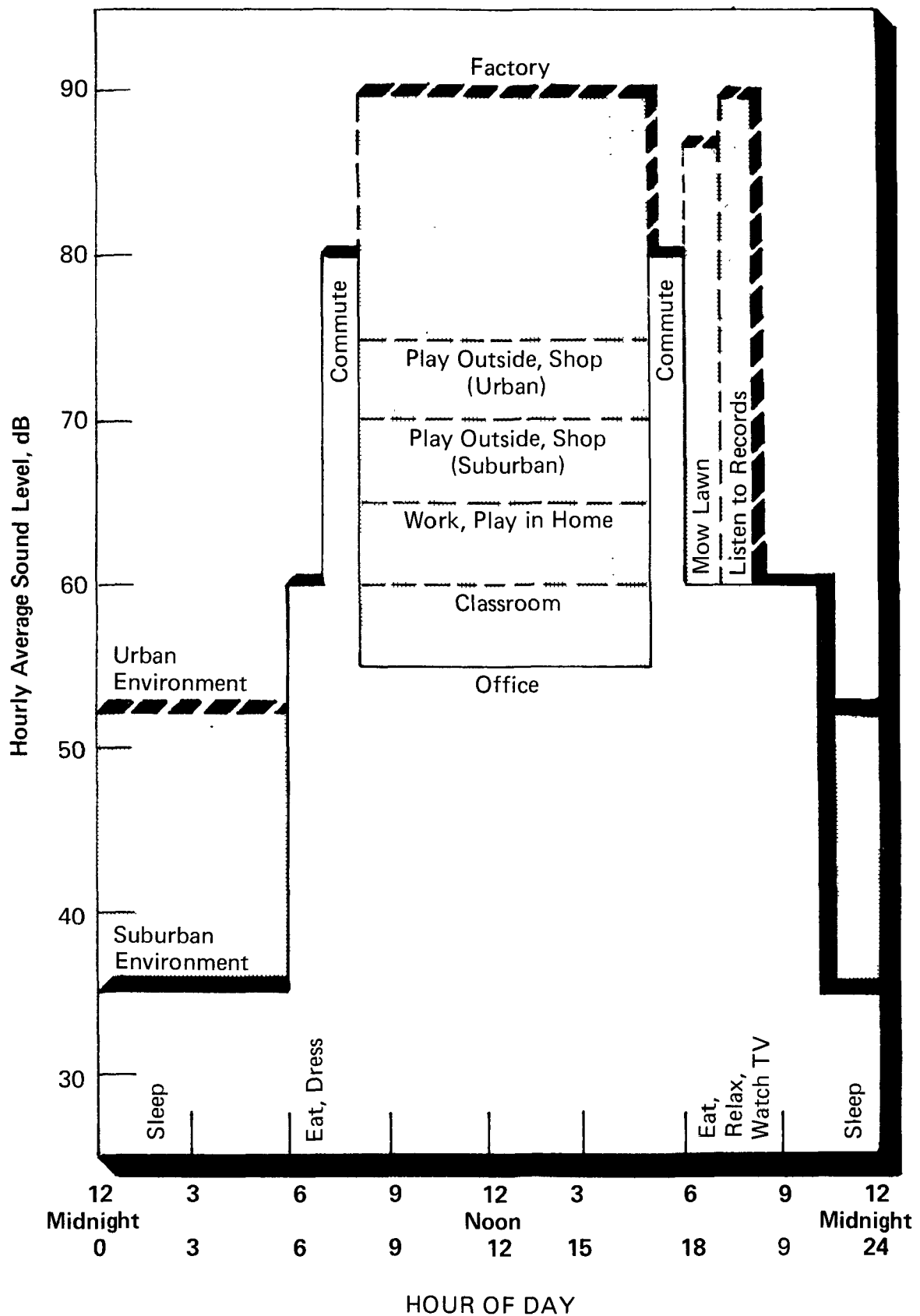


FIGURE 9. GENERALIZED INDIVIDUAL NOISE EXPOSURE PATTERNS

6. Intermittent noise produces less hearing damage than the "equal energy" rule would predict. To be considered intermittent for this purpose, a noise must fall below 65 dB for 10% of each hour and have peaks that exceed the background level by 5 to 15 dB. Intermittent noise is assumed to produce 5 dB less effect than does continuous noise of the same average level.

Calculation of the Maximum Allowable Noise Exposure

Three major scientific studies have attempted to assess hearing damage for various noise exposures. All are based on a comparison of groups of noise-exposed people and comparable non-exposed groups. All three studies attempted to predict hearing loss as a function of noise exposure of a certain percentage of people. Because these studies were of exposure to high-level noise, extrapolations of the data were necessary to estimate the protective exposure level that would produce minimal hearing loss: less than 5 dB at 4000 Hz for 96% of the people.

Forty years of exposure (250 working days per year) to a noise level of 73 dB for 8 hours per day was calculated to produce a hearing loss smaller than 5 dB for 96% of the people. This is the basic datum used to calculate hearing-protective levels of noise exposure. To use it in specific situations, certain corrections must be applied. One correction is to determine the yearly (rather than working day) level (250 to 365 days). This consideration amounts to a reduction 1.6 dB. Another correction, based on exposure on a 24-hour rather than 8-hour basis, produces an additional reduction of 5 dB.

Table IV contains at-ear noise exposure levels that produce negligible hearing losses for both 8-hour and 24-hour exposure on a yearly and working day basis. The 8-hour calculation assumes the remaining 16 hours of the day are spent in relative quiet.

Since an individual often experiences intense noise exposure outside of working hours (for example, while using noisy appliances or pursuing noisy recreation), protection on a 24-hour basis 365 days per year requires exposure of an intermittent variety at an equivalent level of less than 71.4 dB. This value is rounded to 70 dB to provide a slight margin of safety. Exposure to greater levels would produce more than 5 dB hearing loss in at least some of the population.

Table IV
(At-Ear) Exposure Levels that Produce No More Than
5 dB Noise-Induced Hearing Damage Over a 40-Year Period

		Steady (Continuous) Noise	Intermittent Noise	With Margin of Safety
L _{eq} , 8 hour	250 day/year	73	78	75
	365 day/year	71.4	76.4	
L _{eq} , 24 hour	250 day/year	68	73	70
	365 day/year	66.4	71.4	

Discussion of Assumptions

Several assumptions have been made in calculating the 24-hour yearly hearing-protective level of 70 dB. It is reasonable to ask how alternative assumptions would affect this level, and what the range of error might be.

- Q. How would the recommended level be affected by a change in the percentage of the population protected?
- A. Reducing the 96th percentile value to the 50th percentile (i.e., protecting half the population) would increase the protective level value from 70 dB to 77 dB.
- Q. Since agreement on the value of the intermittency correction is imperfect, what other values might be used?
- A. The estimated intermittency correction used in the Levels Document is 5 dB. The true intermittency correction is probably within the range 0 to 15 dB.
- Q. How accurate is the equal energy assumption?
- A. The equal energy assumption when applied to the long times (8 hours to 24, or 250 to 365 days) is fairly accurate. It may be subject to error when applied to short exposures of extreme level.

Q. How meaningful are the basic studies of hearing damage risk?

A. The probable errors of estimates in the three basic studies cannot be stated with absolute accuracy. There are a number of problems in extrapolating percentages of the population damaged from relatively high exposure levels to the protective level. Also, there is the problem of determining the amount of hearing damage when the control (non-exposed) population is subject to high levels of non-occupational noise. Thus, the 70 dB protective level is simply the best present estimate, subject to change if better data become available.

SPEECH COMMUNICATION

Communication is an essential element of human society, and speech is its most convenient form of expression. Interference with speech can degrade living directly, by disturbing normal social and work-related activities, and indirectly, by causing annoyance and stress. Sometimes the communications disturbed by noise are of vital importance, such as warning signals or cries for assistance. Prolonged speech interference and resulting annoyance are clearly not consistent with public health and welfare.

Speech interference from environmental noise can occur at home, at work, during recreation, inside vehicles, and in many other settings. Of chief concern for current purposes are the effects of noise on face-to-face conversations (indoors and outdoors), telephone conversations, and radio or television use.

The degree to which noise disturbs speech depends not only on physical factors (such as noise levels, vocal effort, distances between talkers and listeners, and room acoustics), but also on non-physical factors. The latter include the speaker's enunciation, the familiarity of the listener with the speaker's vocabulary and accent, the topic of conversation, the listener's motivation, and the hearing acuity of the listener. Years of research on speech intelligibility have produced considerable information about how these factors interact. Accurate predictions of speech intelligibility can be based on average noise levels and distances between speakers and listeners.

Speech Interference Indoors

The solid line in Figure 10 shows the effects of steady masking noise on sentence intelligibility for persons with normal hearing in a typical living room. At distances greater than about one meter from the speaker, the level of speech is fairly constant throughout the room.

The highest noise level that permits relaxed conversation with 100% sentence intelligibility throughout the room is 45 dB. People tend to raise their voices when the background noise exceeds 45-50 dB.

Speech Interference Outdoors

The sound level of speech outdoors decreases with increasing distance between speaker and listener. Table V shows distances between speaker and listener for satisfactory outdoor speech intelligibility at two levels of vocal effort in steady background noise levels.

The levels for normal and raised-voice "satisfactory conversation" shown in Table V permit sentence intelligibility of 95% at each distance. Ninety-five percent sentence intelligibility usually permits reliable communication because of the redundancy in normal conversation.

If the noise levels in Table V are exceeded, the speaker and listener must either move closer together or expect reduced intelligibility. For example, consider a conversation at normal vocal effort at a distance of three meters in a steady background noise of 56 dB. If the background level increases to 66 dB, the speakers either will have to move closer (to one meter apart) to maintain the same intelligibility, or alternatively, raise their voices appreciably. If they remain three meters apart without raising their voices, speech intelligibility would drop considerably.

Table V
Steady A-weighted Sound Levels That Allow Communication with
95 Percent Sentence Intelligibility Over Various Distances
Outdoors for Different Voice Levels

VOICE LEVEL	COMMUNICATION DISTANCE (meters)					
	0.5	1	2	3	4	5
Normal Voice (dB)	72	66	60	56	54	52
Raised Voice (dB)	78	72	66	62	60	58

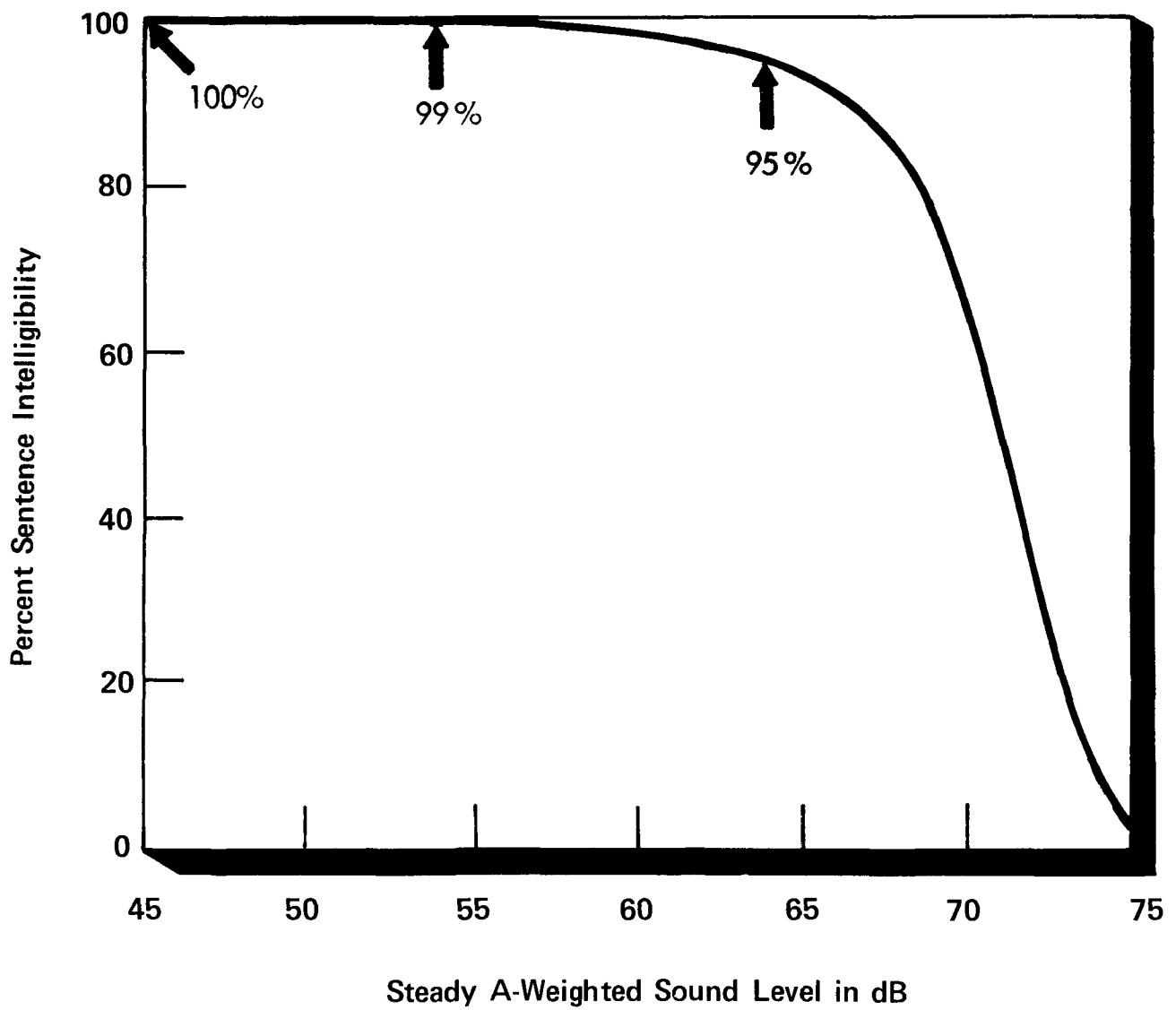


FIGURE 10. INDOOR SENTENCE INTELLIGIBILITY

Discussion

In summary, an L_{dn} of 45 dB permits virtually 100% intelligibility inside buildings. Assuming that a typical home reduces outdoor noise by 15 dB, the outdoor noise level should be no greater than $L_{dn} = 60$ dB to permit 100% intelligible speech indoors. Allowing a 5 dB margin of safety, the outdoor level should be $L_{dn} = 55$ dB. This outdoor level would also guarantee sentence intelligibility of 95% outdoors with normal voice levels at a distance of three meters.

- Q. What do percentages of sentence intelligibility signify?
- A. A given percentage of sentence intelligibility, such as 95% or 99%, indicates the proportion of key words (in a group of sentences) which are correctly heard by normal-hearing listeners.
- Q. How are the speech criteria affected by the fact that people tend to raise their voices in noise?
- A. The speech criteria are based on the principle that an adequate communication environment does not necessitate raised voices.
- Q. How do the identified continuous equivalent levels relate to the fact that, in everyday life, noise fluctuates and is intermittent in nature?
- A. The Levels Document tabulated speech interferences for different combinations of levels and durations to test the limits of certain L_{eq} values under intermittent conditions. It is acknowledged that, given equal L_{eq} values, fluctuating noise may reduce less total speech interference than continuous noise on average. On the other hand, during those times when the higher level noises occur, the speech interference will be greater than its average value.

ACTIVITY INTERFERENCE AND ANNOYANCE

Noise interferes with human activities to varying degrees. Intruding noises can interfere with human activities by distracting attention and by making activities more difficult to perform, especially when concentration is needed. Interference from noise can even make some activities (such as communication or sleep) virtually impossible. Except in the case of speech interference, however, the degree of interference is hard to specify and difficult to relate to the level of noise exposure.

Because people's reactions to time-varying noise differ from moment to moment, and because people's reactions differ in general, protective levels for annoyance and activity interference are determined from data collected from groups of people, rather than from individuals. Fortunately, considerable data from social surveys of community reactions to noise exposure are available for this purpose. Although there are some shortcomings in practically all such data, sufficient agreement exists to allow confident predictions of the noise levels that lead to certain degrees of activity interference and annoyance.

Activity Interference

Social surveys most often have been used to assess community reaction to noise exposure around airports. Table VI shows the percentage of people who reported noise interference with activities among a larger group which was extremely disturbed by aircraft noise.

It is hardly surprising that four of the nine activities in Table VI involve listening. Aircraft noise may also be found annoying because it may startle people, cause houses to shake, or elicit fear of a crash.

Another widely studied source of community noise exposure is vehicular traffic. Activity interference produced by traffic noise closely resembles that of aircraft noise, since interference with conversation, radio, television, and telephone use are all high on the list of activities disturbed.

Table VI
Percentage of Those People Who Were Highly
Disturbed by Aircraft Noise, by Activity Disturbed

ACTIVITY	PERCENT
TV-Radio Reception	20.6
Conversation	14.5
Telephone	13.8
Relaxing Outside	12.5
Relaxing Inside	10.7
Listening to Records/Tapes	9.1
Sleep	7.7
Reading	6.3
Eating	3.5

Community Reactions to Noise

Two major indices of the cumulative effects of environmental noise on people are (A) specific actions taken by individuals or groups (such as complaints), and (B) responses to social survey questionnaires. Over the last 25 years, numerous studies have been conducted to increase understanding of the relationship between noise exposure and its effects on people in communities.

Several factors beyond the magnitude of exposure have been found to influence community reaction. These factors include:

1. Duration of intruding noises and frequency of occurrence
2. Time of year (windows open or closed)
3. Time of day of noise exposure
4. Outdoor noise level in community when intruding noises are not present
5. History of prior exposure to the noise source
6. Attitude toward the noise source
7. Presence of pure tones or impulses.

Since each of these factors may affect community reactions to noise exposure, adjustments for each have been developed to improve the predictability of community reactions beyond that available from a simple measure of exposure level. Figure 11 shows the results of several different case studies, relating L_{dn} (in dB) to community response with various correction factors added. The addition of the correction factors makes it possible to predict community reaction to within ± 5 dB. As is common with annoyance and interference caused by noise, the effects of context and situation may be almost as important as the magnitude or intensity of the source. Caution is also needed in applying these relationships to communities that are significantly quieter than average urban areas.

Social Surveys

Extensive social surveys have been conducted around Heathrow Airport near London and at eight major airports in the United States. The relationship found in these surveys between noise exposure levels and the percentage of respondents who were considered annoyed by noise is summarized in Figure 12.

Discussion

- Q. Is annoyance simply a "welfare" effect?
- A. Annoyance is a reflection of adverse effects which cannot be ascribed solely to "health" or "welfare." "Public health and welfare" in the context of the Noise Control Act is an indivisible term; there are no separate "health" effects or "welfare" effects. "Public health and welfare" includes personal comfort and well-being, and the absence of mental anguish, disturbances and annoyance as well as the absence of clinical symptoms such as hearing loss or demonstrable physiological injury.
- Q. What is annoyance due to noise?
- A. Noise annoyance may be viewed as any negative subjective reaction to noise on the part of an individual or group. It is not an indication of weakness or inability to cope with stress on the part of the annoyed. More likely it signifies transient (or possibly lasting) stress beyond the control of the conscious individual. This is often expressed on social surveys as the percentage of people who express differing degrees of disturbance or dissatisfaction due to the noisiness of their environments. For the purpose of identifying protective noise levels, annoyance is quantified by using the percentage of people who are annoyed by noise. This is felt to be the best estimate of the average general adverse response of people, and in turn, is viewed as reflecting activity interference and the overall desire for quiet.
- Q. Are people annoyed at levels below an L_{dn} of 45 or 55 dB?
- A. Individuals, or even groups, may be annoyed by noise at low levels—the dripping faucet or humming fluorescent bulb are good examples. Annoyance depends very much on the situation, and on individual differences and noise durations.
- Q. What do complaints represent?
- A. Complaints are used by officials as an indication that a noise problem exists (although a noise problem may well exist in the absence of specific complaints). However, they do not necessarily represent the magnitude of a noise problem. The number of people who file complaints is only a very small percentage of those who are annoyed.

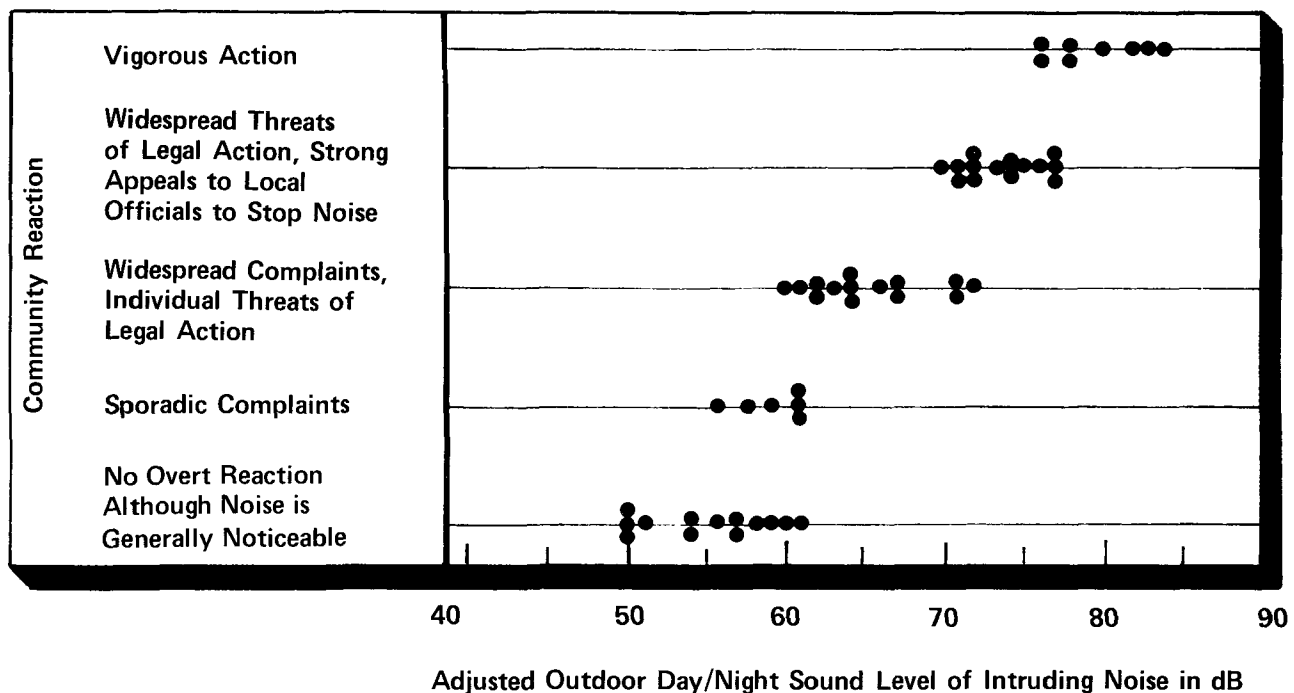


FIGURE 11. COMBINED DATA FROM COMMUNITY CASE STUDIES ADJUSTED FOR CONDITIONS OF EXPOSURE

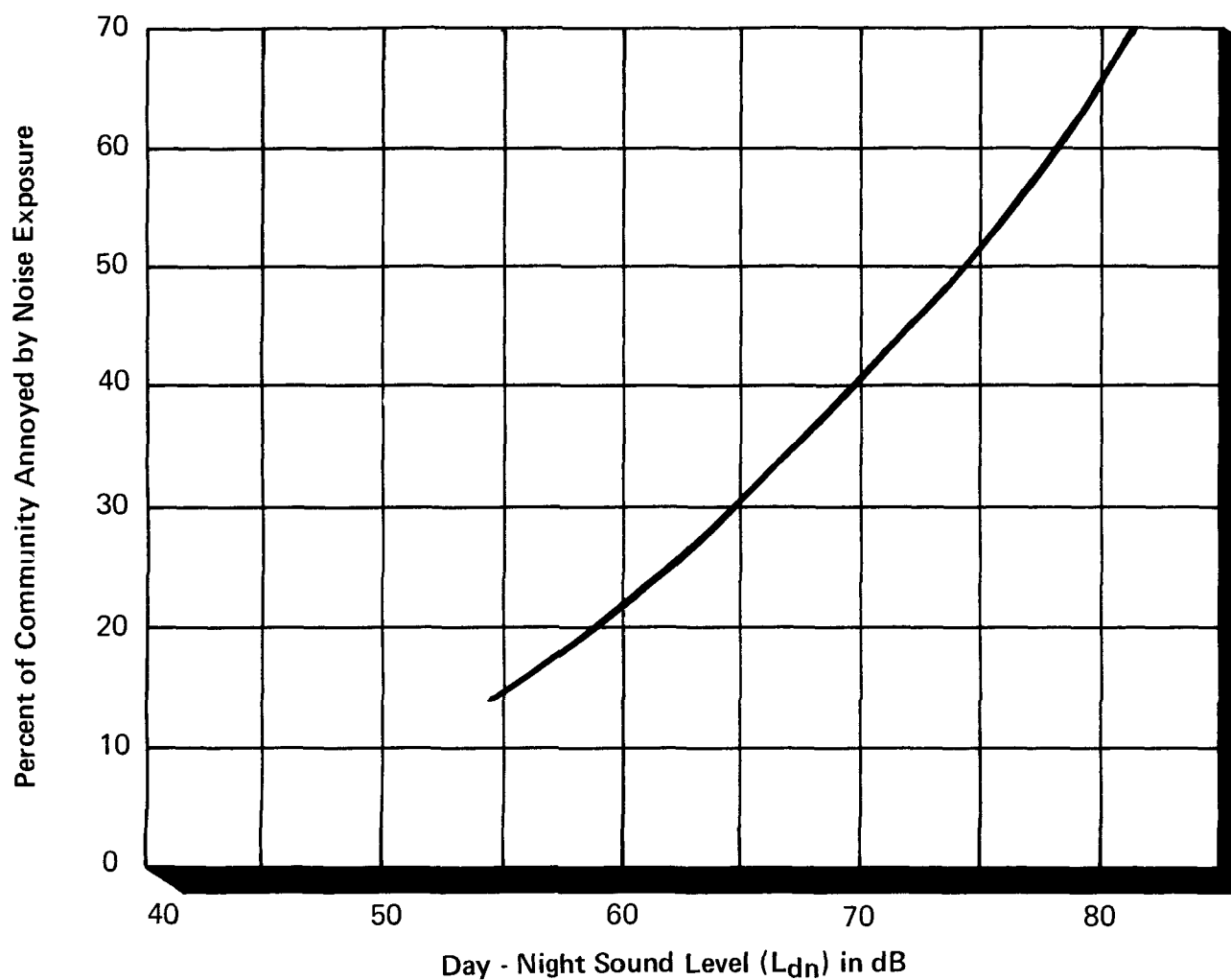


FIGURE 12. PERCENTAGE OF POPULATION ANNOYED BY COMMUNITY NOISE (HEATHROW AIRPORT STUDY)

- Q. How is the margin of safety for annoyance applied?
- A. The identified indoor level of $L_{dn} = 45$ incorporates a margin of safety for 100% protection of speech perception which is used as a surrogate for annoyance. The outdoor identified level of 55 L_{dn} protects speech outdoors to a level of 95% intelligibility at up to 2 meters, while incorporating a 5 dB margin of safety for speech, and giving added weight to the range of adverse effects.
- Q. Why is the nighttime penalty 10 decibels?
- A. The 10 dB nighttime weighting had two bases: first, this weighting value has been applied successfully here and in other countries; secondly, in quiet environments, the natural drop in level from day to night is about 10 dB.

SUMMARY

On the basis of its interpretation of available scientific information, EPA has identified a range of yearly Day-Night Sound Levels sufficient to protect public health and welfare from the effects of environmental noise. It is very important that these noise levels, summarized in Table VIII, not be misconstrued. Since the protective levels were derived without concern for technical or economic feasibility, and contain a margin of safety to insure their protective value, they must not be viewed as standards, criteria, regulations, or goals. Rather, they should be viewed as levels below which there is no reason to suspect that the general population will be at risk from any of the identified effects of noise.

Table VIII
Yearly L_{dn} Values That Protect Public Health
and Welfare with a Margin of Safety

EFFECT	LEVEL	AREA
Hearing	$L_{eq(24)} \leq 70$ dB	All areas (at the ear)
Outdoor activity interference and annoyance	$L_{dn} \leq 55$ dB	Outdoors in residential areas and farms and other outdoor areas where people spend widely varying amounts of time and other places in which quiet is a basis for use.
	$L_{eq(24)} \leq 55$ dB	Outdoor areas where people spend limited amounts of time, such as school yards, playgrounds, etc.
Indoor activity interference and annoyance	$L_{dn} \leq 45$ dB	Indoor residential areas
	$L_{eq(24)} \leq 45$ dB	Other indoor areas with human activities such as schools, etc.

Outdoor yearly levels on the L_{dn} scale are sufficient to protect public health and welfare if they do not exceed 55 dB in sensitive areas (residences, schools, and hospitals). Inside buildings, yearly levels on the L_{dn} scale are sufficient to protect public health and welfare if they do not exceed 45 dB. Maintaining 55 L_{dn} outdoors should ensure adequate protection for indoor living. To protect against hearing damage, one's 24-hour noise exposure at the ear should not exceed 70 dB.

MISUSES, MISUNDERSTANDINGS, AND QUESTIONS

Perhaps the most fundamental misuse of the Levels Document is treatment of the identified levels as regulatory goals. They are *not* regulatory goals; they are levels defined by a negotiated scientific consensus. These levels were developed without concern for economic and technological feasibility, are intentionally conservative to protect the most sensitive portion of the American population, and include an additional margin of safety. In short, the levels in Table VIII are neither more nor less than what Congress re-

quired them to be: levels of environmental noise requisite to protect the public health and welfare with an adequate margin of safety.

- Q. Why doesn't the Levels Document explicitly say how much noise is too much noise?
- A. Decisions about how much noise is too much noise for whom, for how long, and under what conditions demand consideration of economic, political, and technological matters far beyond the intent of the Levels Document. Such decisions are properly embodied in formal regulations, not informational publications such as the Levels Document.
- Q. How do I use this information for local purposes?
- A. This question reflects the need to reconcile local economic and political realities with scientific information. People who formulate local noise abatement programs cannot escape the responsibility of making such economic and political compromises for their constituencies. The Levels Document does not impose arbitrary Federal decisions about the appropriateness of noise environments upon any level of government, nor is it a source of prescriptions for solving local noise problems. It is best viewed as a technical aid to local decision makers who seek to balance scientific information about effects of noise on people with other considerations, such as cost and technical feasibility.
- Q. If the identified noise levels are indeed sufficient to protect public health and welfare, shouldn't they be considered to be long-range regulatory goals?
- A. Attainment of the identified levels of environmental noise can only be considered idealized goals. Pragmatically, it is unlikely that local, state, or Federal regulatory strategies will seek to attain such levels for all situations in the near future.
- Q. Why isn't the Levels Document more definite about specific effects associated with various noise exposure conditions?
- A. Available knowledge about the effects of noise would not support more precise statements. Increasingly specific statements will be incorporated in future informational publications as they are justified by increasing knowledge of human response to noise exposure.

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13. ABSTRACT (Maximum 200 words) This report is the second edition of a guidance manual originally issued in 1995 which presents procedures for predicting and assessing noise and vibration impacts of proposed mass transit projects. All types of bus and rail projects are covered. Procedures for assessing noise and vibration impacts are provided for different stages of project development, from early planning before mode and alignment have been selected through preliminary engineering and final design. Both for noise and vibration, there are three levels of analysis described. The framework acts as a screening process, reserving detailed analysis for projects with the greatest potential for impacts while allowing a simpler process for projects with little or no effects. This updated guidance contains noise and vibration impact criteria that are used to assess the magnitude of predicted impacts. A range of mitigation measures are described for dealing with adverse noise and vibration impacts. There is a discussion of noise and vibration during the construction stage and also discussion of how the technical information should be presented in the Federal Transit Administration's environmental documents. This guidance will be of interest not only to technical specialists who conduct the analyses but also to transit agency staff, federal agency reviewers, and members of the general public who may be affected by the projects.				
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TRANSIT NOISE AND VIBRATION IMPACT ASSESSMENT

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PREFACE

This guidance manual on transit noise and vibration impact assessment is an updated edition of a document originally published in 1995. The manual details the procedures for producing accurate impact assessments for proposed federally-funded mass transit projects and discusses ways of reducing excessive noise and vibration caused by projects. While the manual is intended primarily for acoustics professionals who conduct the analyses as part of the environmental review process, it is written for a broader audience. Sections on noise and vibration fundamentals and a glossary of terms allow lay readers to gain a better understanding of one of the more technical subjects covered in the Federal Transit Administration's environmental documents.

The revisions in this manual are based on practitioners' experience in using the procedures and on developments that have occurred in this field over the past decade. The basic procedures for prediction and impact assessment remain the same; however, changes have been made throughout the document to clarify the procedures and to add new content. Some of the more significant changes involve: inclusion of noise reference levels for several new transit modes; fuller explanation of how to handle multimodal highway/transit projects; methods for assessing locomotive horn noise at grade crossings; expanded discussion of noise and vibration mitigation measures including costs; refined vibration impact criteria expressed in one-third octave bands for Detailed Analysis; and more examples on how to use the General Noise Assessment procedures for different types of transit projects.

This updated guidance manual supersedes the original document and should be used for addressing noise and vibration impacts for all construction projects seeking funding from FTA. For the great majority of projects, the results obtained from application of the methods described in this manual will not depart significantly from results obtained from the old manual. This document is also available in the Planning and Environment section of FTA's Web site (www.fta.dot.gov).

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 PURPOSE

Noise and vibration assessments are key elements of the environmental impact assessment process for mass transit projects. Experience has shown that noise and vibration are among the major concerns with regard to the effects of a transit project on the surrounding community. A transit system is of necessity placed near population centers and often causes significant noise and vibration at nearby residences and other sensitive types of land use.

This manual provides guidance for preparing and reviewing the noise and vibration sections of environmental documents. In the interest of promoting quality and uniformity in assessments, the manual will be used by project sponsors and consultants in performing noise and vibration analyses for inclusion in environmental documents. The manual sets forth the methods and procedures for determining the level of noise and vibration impact resulting from most federally-funded transit projects and for determining what can be done to mitigate such impact. Since the methods have been developed to assess typical transit projects, there will be some situations not explicitly covered in this manual. The exercise of professional judgment may be required to extend the basic methods in these cases.

1.2 THE ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW PROCESS

The Federal Transit Administration (FTA) provides capital assistance for a wide range of mass transit projects – from completely new rail rapid transit systems to bus maintenance facilities and vehicle purchases. The extent of environmental analysis and review will depend on the scope and complexity of the proposed project and the associated environmental impacts. FTA's environmental impact regulation classifies the most common projects according to the different levels of environmental analysis required, ranging from an environmental impact statement (EIS) to little or no environmental documentation (categorical exclusion). FTA's environmental impact regulation is codified in Title 23, Code of Federal Regulations, Part 771.^{(1)*}

*References are located at the end of each chapter.

Environmental Impact Statements. Large fixed-guideway projects, such as heavy rail, light rail, commuter rail and automated guideway transit systems, normally require environmental impact statements, including an in-depth noise and vibration assessment. While there may be exceptions to the EIS requirement, in the great majority of cases new rail starts or extensions to existing systems involve significant environmental effects in the context of the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA). Because they are located in dense urban areas, noise and vibration impacts are a frequent concern; thus it is likely that for the major infrastructure projects requiring an EIS, the most detailed treatment of noise and/or vibration impacts will also be required.

There are other projects as well which may require a detailed analysis of noise and vibration impacts even if an EIS is not required to comply with NEPA. These could be bus/high-occupancy-vehicle (HOV) lanes built on existing highways or construction of certain bus or rail terminals and storage and maintenance facilities. If the project is proposed to be located in or very close to a sensitive area or site, it is prudent to use the most detailed procedures contained in the manual to predict noise and/or vibration levels since this will provide the most reliable basis for considering measures to mitigate excessive noise/vibration at a specific site.

Categorical Exclusions. At the other extreme is a host of smaller transit projects which normally do not cause significant environmental impacts and do not require noise and vibration assessment. These projects are listed as "categorical exclusions" in FTA's environmental regulation, meaning that FTA has determined that there are no significant environmental impacts for those types of projects and no environmental document is required. Examples are: vehicle purchases; track and railbed maintenance; installation of maintenance equipment within the facility, etc. Section 771.117(c) contains a list of transit projects predetermined to be categorical exclusions.

Other types of projects may also qualify as categorical exclusions, for example, certain transit terminals, transfer facilities, bus and rail storage and maintenance facilities (see 23 CFR 771.117(d)). These projects usually involve more construction and a greater potential for off-site impacts. They are presented in the regulation with conditions or criteria which must be met in order to qualify for categorical exclusion. The projects are reviewed individually by FTA to assure that any off-site impacts are properly mitigated. Depending on the proposed project site and the surrounding land use, a noise and vibration assessment may be needed even though the project may ultimately qualify as a categorical exclusion. The screening process in Chapters 4 and 9 will be helpful in pointing out potential noise and vibration concerns and the general assessment procedures may then be used to define the level of impact.

Environmental Assessments. When a proposed project is presented to FTA, if it is uncertain whether the project requires an EIS or qualifies as a categorical exclusion, FTA will direct the project sponsor to prepare an environmental assessment (EA). Generally, an EA is selected (rather than trying to process the project as a categorical exclusion) if the FTA reviewer feels that several types of impacts need further investigation, for example, air quality, noise, wetlands, historic sites, traffic, etc. An EA is a relatively brief environmental study which helps determine the magnitude of the impacts that will likely be caused by the project. If, during the analysis, it appears that any impacts are significant, an EIS will be prepared. If the analysis shows that none of the impacts is significant or if mitigation measures are incorporated in the project to adequately deal

with adverse impact, the EA will fully document this and serve as the basis for a Finding of No Significant Impact issued by FTA. It is important to note that when mitigation measures are relied on, they must be described in detail in the EA since FTA's finding is based on the inclusion of these measures in the project.

FTA's environmental regulation does not list typical projects that require EA's. An EA may be prepared for any type of project if uncertainty exists about the magnitude or extent of the impacts. Experience has shown that most of the EA's prepared for transit projects require an assessment of noise impacts.

1.3 NOISE AND VIBRATION ANALYSIS IN PLANNING AND PROJECT DEVELOPMENT

Major capital investment projects are developed initially from a comprehensive transportation planning process conducted in metropolitan areas (see 23 CFR 450.300). The metropolitan planning process includes the consideration of social, economic, and environmental effects of proposed major infrastructure improvements. However, at this stage, environmental effects are usually considered on a broad scale, for example, overall development patterns, impact on greenspace, and regional air quality. Noise and vibration assessments are not typically done at the systems planning stage since the proposed infrastructure improvements lack the necessary detail.

Once the need for a major capital investment in a corridor is established in the metropolitan transportation plan, the task then becomes identifying the transit mode and alignment best suited for the corridor. If FTA capital investment funds will be pursued, the project sponsor must perform an "alternatives analysis."⁽²⁾ Often combined with a Draft EIS, the alternatives analysis presents information on benefits, costs, and impacts of alternative strategies for meeting the need for new capacity. Usually, several alternatives ranging in cost will be evaluated. If environmental impacts of the alternatives will be assessed, noise and, to a lesser extent, vibration are primary issues. The screening and general assessment procedures described in this manual are well-suited to compare and contrast noise/vibration effects among different modes and alignments. In fact, the general assessment procedures were developed partly to respond to this need. In addition, they can be used for any specific project where the screening procedure indicates potential for impact and the project sponsor wants a relatively quick assessment of the level of impact.

If the results of the alternatives analysis justify further development of a major capital investment, FTA will approve entry of the proposed project into preliminary engineering. During preliminary engineering, the environmental review process is completed. With the mode and alignment determined, the impact assessment at this stage focuses on the locally preferred alternative for a major capital investment. The detailed analysis procedures for noise can be used to produce the most accurate estimates of noise impact for the proposed project. The detailed procedures should be used as the basis for reaching any decisions on the need for noise reduction measures and the types of measures that are appropriate for the project.

After the NEPA process is completed for a major project, federal funding for final design may be granted. If vibration impacts were identified during preliminary engineering, a detailed analysis of vibration impact may be conducted during final design. Final design activities will produce the geotechnical information needed to

refine the impact assessment and allow the most detailed consideration of vibration control measures, if needed. Even for smaller transit projects, if vibration impact is predicted in a general assessment, vibration mitigation measures should only be specified after a detailed analysis has been done. Detailed vibration analysis is best accomplished during final design of the project.

Once the project enters construction, there may still be a need for noise or vibration analysis in some circumstances. Large construction projects in densely populated residential areas may require noise monitoring to make sure that agreed-upon noise limits are not exceeded. Vibration testing may be needed in the final stages of construction to determine whether vibration control measures are having the predicted effect.

Considering that transit projects must be located amid or very close to concentrations of people, noise and vibration impacts can be a concern throughout the planning and project development phases. This manual offers the flexibility to address noise and vibration at different stages in the development of a project and in different levels of detail depending on the types of decisions that need to be made.

There are three levels of analysis which may be employed, depending on the type and scale of the project, the stage of project development, and the environmental setting. The technical content of each of the three levels is specified in the body of this document, but a summary of each level is given in the following paragraphs:

- **Screening Procedure:** Identifies noise- and vibration-sensitive land uses in the vicinity of a project and whether there is likely to be impact. It also serves to determine the noise and vibration study areas for further analysis when sensitive locations are present. The screening process may be all that is required for many of the smaller transit projects which qualify as categorical exclusions. When noise/vibration-sensitive receivers are found to be present, there are two levels of quantitative analysis available to predict impact and assess the need for mitigation measures.
- **General Assessment:** Identifies location and estimated severity of noise and vibration impacts in the noise and vibration study areas identified in the screening procedure. For major capital investments, the General Assessment provides the appropriate level of detail to compare alternative modes and alignments in alternatives analysis. It can be used in conjunction with established highway noise prediction procedures to compare and contrast highway, transit and multimodal alternatives. Before basic decisions have been reached on mode and alignment in a corridor, it is not prudent to conduct the most detailed level of noise and vibration analysis. For smaller transit projects, this level is used for a closer examination of projects which show possible impacts as a result of screening. For many smaller projects, this level may be sufficient to define impacts and determine whether mitigation is necessary.
- **Detailed Analysis:** Quantifies impacts through an in-depth analysis usually only performed for a single alternative. Delineates site-specific impacts and mitigation measures for the preferred alternative in major investment projects during preliminary engineering. For other smaller projects, Detailed Analysis may be warranted as part of the initial environmental assessment if there are potentially severe impacts due to close proximity of sensitive land uses.

The three levels of noise and vibration assessment are described in the chapters which follow.

1.4 ORGANIZATION OF THE MANUAL

The guidance manual is divided into two parts, noise and vibration. Each part has parallel organization according to the following subjects:

Noise/Vibration

- Basic Concepts
- Criteria
- Screening Procedure
- General Assessment
- Detailed Analysis

Construction Noise/Vibration

Documentation

Appendices

- Glossary
- Background for Transit Noise Impact Criteria
- Receiver Selection
- Existing Noise Determination
- Noise Source Level Determination
- Maximum Noise Level Computation

REFERENCES

1. U.S. Department of Transportation, Federal Transit Administration and Federal Highway Administration, "Environmental Impact and Related Procedures," Final Rule, 52 Federal Register 32646 -32669; August 28, 1987 (23 Code of Federal Regulations 771).
2. U.S. Department of Transportation, Federal Transit Administration, "Major Capital Investment Projects," Final Rule, 65 Federal Register 76863-76884; December 7, 2000 (49 CFR Part 611).

2. BASIC NOISE CONCEPTS

This chapter discusses the basic concepts of transit noise which provide background for Chapters 3 through 6, where transit noise is computed and assessed. The Source-Path-Receiver framework sketched in Figure 2-1 is central to all environmental noise studies. Each transit **source** generates close-by noise levels which depend upon the type of source and its operating characteristics. Then, along the propagation **path** between all sources and receivers, noise levels are reduced (attenuated) by distance, intervening obstacles and other factors. And finally at each **receiver**, noise combines from all sources to interfere, perhaps, with receiver activities. This chapter contains an overview of this Source-Path-Receiver framework. Following this overview is a primer on the fundamentals of noise characteristics.

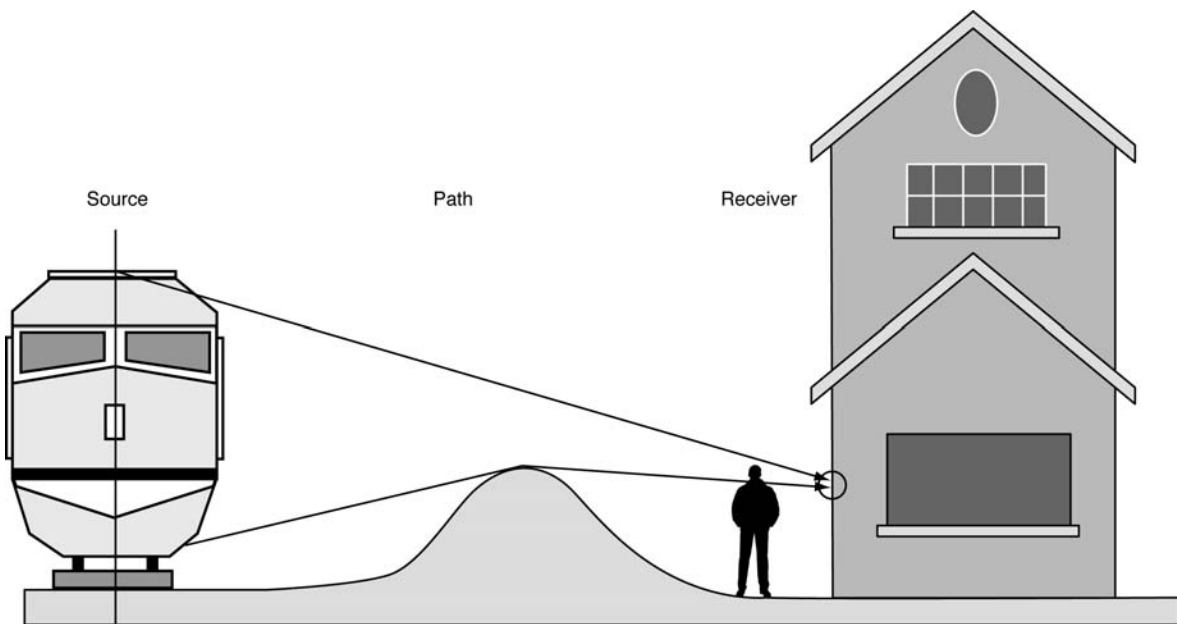


Figure 2-1. The Source-Path-Receiver Framework

In brief, this chapter contains:

- A primer on the fundamentals of noise characteristics (Section 2.1)
- An overview of transit **sources**: a listing of major sources, plus some discussion of noise-generation mechanisms (Section 2.2)
- An overview of noise **paths**: a discussion of the various attenuating mechanisms on the path between source and receiver (Section 2.3)
- An overview of **receiver** response to transit noise: a discussion of the technical background for transit-noise criteria and the distinction between absolute and relative noise impact (Section 2.4)
- A discussion of the **noise descriptors** used in this manual for transit noise (Section 2.5)

2.1 FUNDAMENTALS OF NOISE

Noise is generally considered to be unwanted sound. Sound is what we hear when our ears are exposed to small pressure fluctuations in the air. There are many ways in which pressure fluctuations are generated, but typically they are caused by vibrating movement of a solid object. This manual uses the terms ‘noise’ and ‘sound’ interchangeably since there is no physical difference between them. Noise can be described in terms of three variables: amplitude (loud or soft); frequency (pitch); and time pattern (variability).

Amplitude. Loudness of a sound depends on the amplitude of the fluctuations above and below atmospheric pressure associated with a particular sound wave. The mean value of the alternating positive and negative pressure fluctuations is the static atmospheric pressure, not a useful descriptor of sound. However, the effective magnitude of the sound pressure in a sound wave can be expressed by the “root-mean-square” (rms) of the oscillating pressure measured in Pascals, a unit named after Blaise Pascal a 17th century French mathematician. In calculation of the ‘rms’, the values of sound pressure are squared to make them all positive and time-averaged to smooth out variations. The ‘rms’ pressure is the square root of this time-averaged value.

The quietest sound that can be heard by most humans, the “threshold of hearing,” is a sound pressure of about 20 microPascals, and the loudest sounds typically found in our environment range up to 20 million microPascals. Because of the difficulty in dealing with such an extreme range of numbers, acousticians use a compressed scale based on logarithms of the ratios of the sound energy contained in the wave related to the square of sound pressures instead of the sound pressures themselves, resulting in the “sound pressure level” in decibels (dB). The ‘B’ in dB is always capitalized because the unit is named after Alexander Graham Bell, a leading 19th century innovator in communication. Sound pressure level (L_p) is defined as:

$$L_p = 10 \log_{10} (p_{\text{rms}}^2 / p_{\text{ref}}^2) = 20 \log_{10} (p_{\text{rms}} / p_{\text{ref}}) \text{ dB, where } p_{\text{ref}} = 20 \text{ microPascals.}$$

Inserting the range of sound pressure values mentioned above results in the threshold of hearing at 20 microPascals at 0 dB and a typical loudest sound of 20 million microPascals is 120 dB.

Decibel Addition. The combination of two or more sound pressure levels at a single location involves ‘decibel addition’ or the addition of logarithmic quantities. The quantities that are added are the sound energies (p_{rms}^2). For example, a doubling of identical sound sources results in a 3 dB increase, since:

$$10 \log_{10}(2 p_{\text{rms}}^2 / p_{\text{ref}}^2) = 10 \log_{10}(p_{\text{rms}}^2 / p_{\text{ref}}^2) + 10 \log_{10}(2) = 10 \log_{10}(p_{\text{rms}}^2 / p_{\text{ref}}^2) + 3.$$

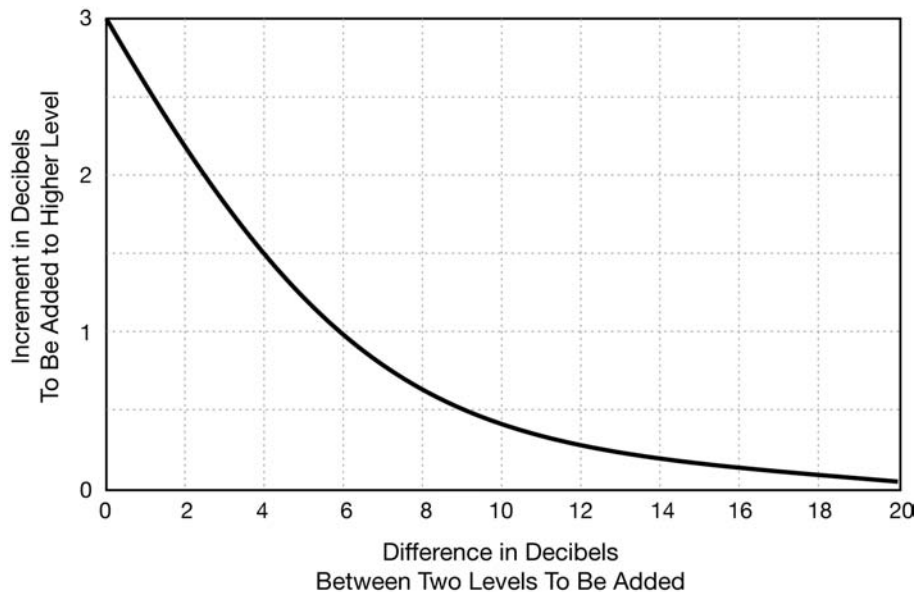


Figure 2-2. Graph for Approximate Decibel Addition

For example, if the noise from one bus resulted in a sound pressure level of 70 dB, the noise from two buses would be 73 dB. Figure 2.2 provides a handy graph that can be used to add sound levels in decibels. For example, if two sound levels of 64 dB and 60 dB are to be added, the difference in decibels between the two levels to be added is 4 dB. The curve intersects the “4” where the increment to be added to the higher level is “1.5.” Therefore the sum of the two levels is 65.5 dB.

Frequency. Sound is a fluctuation of air pressure. The number of times the fluctuation occurs in one second is called its frequency. In acoustics, frequency is quantified in cycles per second, or Hertz (abbreviated Hz), named after Heinrich Hertz, a famous 19th century German physicist. Some sounds, like whistles, are associated with a single frequency; this type of sound is called a “pure tone.” Most often, however, noise is made up of many frequencies, all blended together in a spectrum. Human hearing covers the frequency range of 20 Hz to 20,000 Hz. If the spectrum is dominated by many low frequency components, the noise will have a characteristic like the rumble of thunder. The spectrum in Figure 2-3 illustrates the full range of acoustical

frequencies that can occur near a transit system. In this example, the noise spectrum was measured near a train on a steel elevated structure with a sharp curve. This spectrum has a major low frequency peak centered around 80 Hz. Although not dominant in this example, frequencies in the range of 500 Hz to 2000 Hz are associated with the roar of wheel /rail noise. However a strong peak above 2000 Hz is associated with the wheel squeal of the train on the curve.

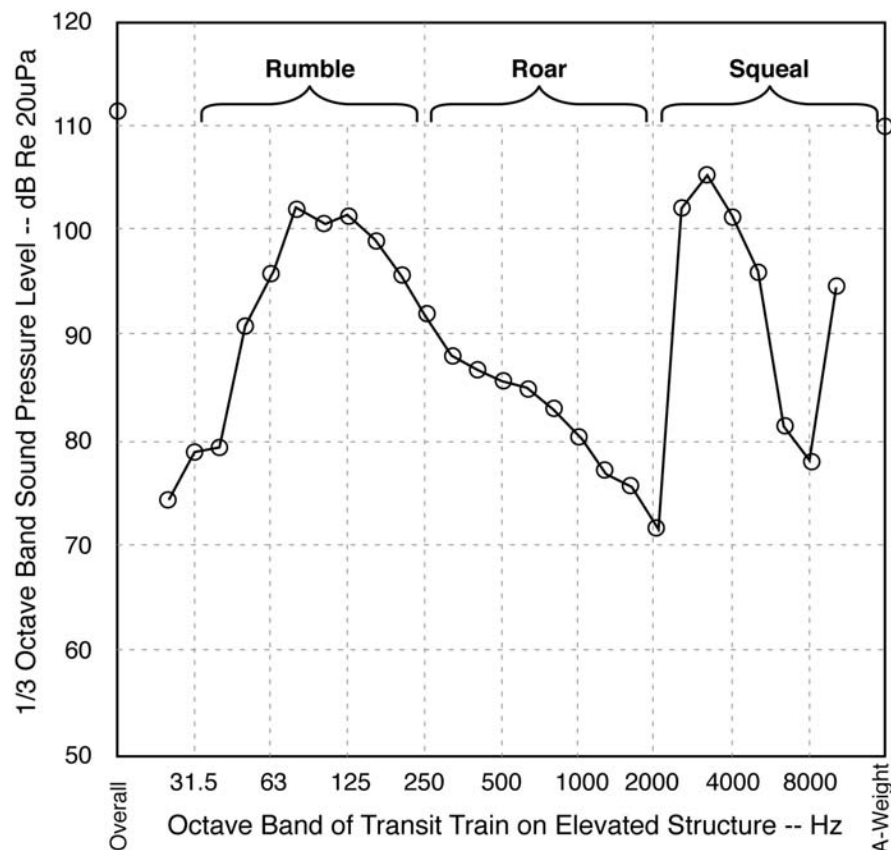


Figure 2-3. Noise Spectrum of Transit Train on Curve on Elevated Structure

Our human hearing system does not respond equally to all frequencies of sound. For sounds normally heard in our environment, low frequencies below 250 Hz and very high frequencies above 10,000 Hz are less audible than the frequencies in between. Acoustical scientists measured and developed frequency response functions that characterize the way people respond to different frequencies. These are the so-called A-, B- and C-weighted curves, representing the way people respond to sounds of normal, very loud and extremely loud sounds, respectively. Environmental noise generally falls into the “normal” category so that the A-weighted sound level is considered best to represent the human response. The A-weighted curve is shown in

Figure 2-4. This curve shows that sounds at 50 Hz would have to be amplified by 30 dB to be perceived equally as loud as a sound at 1000 Hz at normal sound levels.

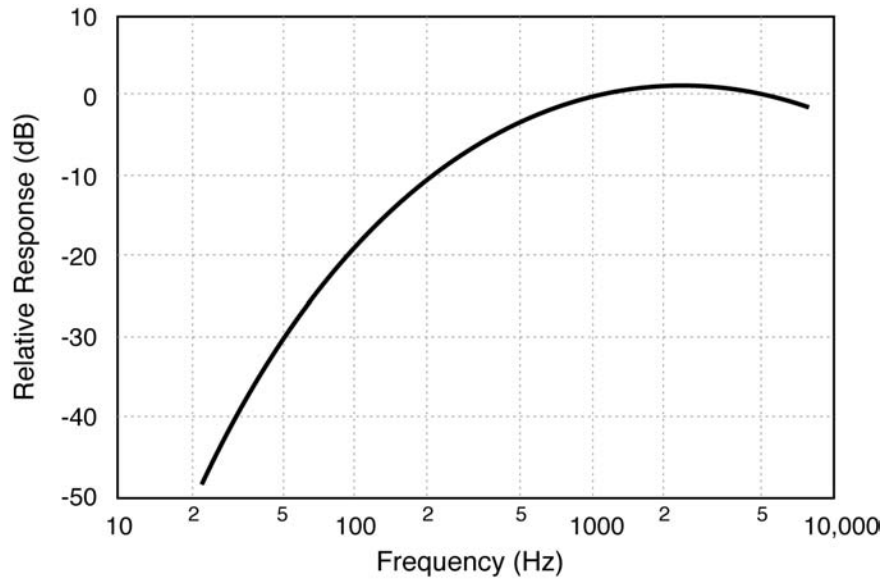


Figure 2-4. A-weighting Curve

Low frequencies are associated with long wavelengths of sound. Conversely, high frequencies are the result of short wavelengths. The way in which frequency and wavelength of sound waves are related is the speed of sound. The relationship is:

$$f\lambda = c, \text{ where}$$

f = frequency in cycles per second (Hz)

λ = wavelength in feet, and

c = speed of sound in feet per second.

The speed of sound in air varies with temperature, but at standard conditions is approximately 1000 feet per second. Therefore, according to the equation, a frequency of 1000 Hz has a wavelength of 1 foot and a frequency of 50 Hz has a wavelength of 20 feet.

The scale of these waves explains in part the reason humans perceive sounds of 1000 Hz better than those of 50 Hz – the wavelengths are similar to the size of the receiver's head. Waves of 20 feet in length at 50 Hz are house-sized, which is why low-frequency sounds, such as those from idling locomotives, are not deterred by walls and windows of a home. These sounds transmit indoors with relatively little reduction in strength.

Time pattern. The third important characteristic of noise is its variation in time. Environmental noise generally derives, in part, from a conglomeration of distant noise sources. Such sources may include distant traffic, wind in trees, and distant industrial or farming activities, all part of our daily lives. These distant sources create a low-level "background noise" in which no particular individual source is identifiable. Background noise is often relatively constant from moment to moment, but varies slowly from hour to hour as natural forces change or as human activity follows its daily cycle. Superimposed on this low-level, slowly varying background noise is a succession of identifiable noisy events of relatively brief duration. These events may include single-vehicle passbys, aircraft flyovers, screeching of brakes, and other short-term events, all causing the noise level to fluctuate significantly from moment to moment.

It is possible to describe these fluctuating noises in the environment using single-number descriptors. To do this allows manageable measurements, computations, and impact assessment. The search for adequate single-number noise descriptors has encompassed hundreds of attitudinal surveys and laboratory experiments, plus decades of practical experience with many alternative descriptors.

2.2 SOURCES OF TRANSIT VEHICLE NOISE

This section discusses major characteristics of the sources of transit noise. Transit noise is generated by transit vehicles in motion. Vehicle propulsion units generate: (1) whine from electric control systems and traction motors that propel rapid transit cars, (2) diesel-engine exhaust noise, from both diesel-electric locomotives and transit buses, (3) air-turbulence noise generated by cooling fans, and (4) gear noise. Additional noise of motion is generated by the interaction of wheels/tires with their running surfaces. Tire noise from rubber-tired vehicles is significant at normal operating speeds. The interaction of steel wheels and rails generates three types of noise: (1) rolling noise due to continuous rolling contact, (2) impact noise when a wheel encounters a discontinuity in the running surface, such as a rail joint, turnout or crossover, and (3) squeal generated by friction on tight curves.

Figure 2-5 illustrates typical dependence of source strength on vehicle speed for two types of transit vehicles. Plotted vertically in this figure is a qualitative indication of the maximum sound level during a passby. In the figure, speed dependence is strong for electric-powered transit trains because wheel/rail noise dominates, and noise from this source increases strongly with increasing speed. On the other hand, speed dependence is less for diesel-powered commuter rail trains, particularly at low speeds where the locomotive exhaust noise dominates. As

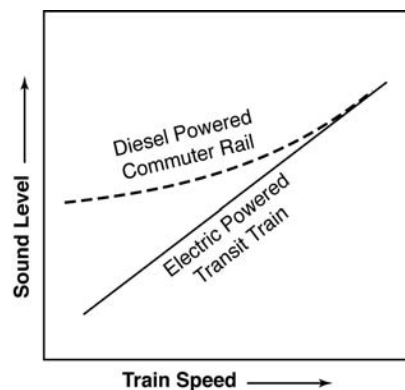


Figure 2-5. Example Sound Level Dependence on Speed

speed increases, wheel-rail noise becomes the dominant noise source and diesel- and electric-powered trains will generate similar noise levels. Similarly, but not shown, speed dependence is also strong for automobiles, city buses (two-axle) and non-accelerating highway buses (three-axle), because tire/pavement noise dominates for these vehicles; but it is not significant for accelerating highway buses where exhaust noise is dominant. For transit vehicles in motion, close-by sound levels also depend upon other parameters, such as vehicle acceleration and vehicle length, plus the type/condition of the running surfaces. For very high-speed rail vehicles, air turbulence can also be a significant source of noise. In addition, the guideway structure can also radiate noise as it vibrates in response to the dynamic loading of the moving vehicle.

Transit vehicles are equipped with horns and bells for use in emergency situations and as a general audible warning to track workers and trespassers within the right-of-way as well as to pedestrians and motor vehicles at highway grade crossings. Horns and bells on the moving transit vehicle, combined with stationary bells at grade crossings can generate noise levels considered to be extremely annoying to nearby residents.

Noise is generated by transit vehicles even when they are stationary. For example, auxiliary equipment often continues to run even when vehicles are stationary – equipment such as cooling fans on motors, radiator fans, plus hydraulic, pneumatic and air-conditioning pumps. Also, transit buses are often left idling in stations or storage yards. Noise is also generated by sources at fixed-transit facilities. Such sources include ventilation fans in transit stations, in subway tunnels, and in power substations, equipment in chiller plants, and many activities within maintenance facilities and shops.

Table 2-1 summarizes sources of transit noise separately by vehicle type and/or type of facility. Procedures for computing close-by noise levels for major sources as a function of operating parameters such as vehicle speed are given in Chapters 5 and 6.

Table 2-1. Sources of Transit Noise		
Vehicle or Facility	Dominant Components	Comments
Rail Rapid Transit (RRT), or Light Rail Transit (LRT) on exclusive right-of-way	Wheel/rail interaction and guideway amplification	Depends on condition of wheels and rails.
	Propulsion system	When accelerating and at higher speeds.
	Brakes	When stopping.
	Auxiliary equipment	When stopped.
	Wheel squeal	On tight curves.
	<i>In general</i>	Noise increases with speed and train length.
Light Rail Transit (LRT) in mixed traffic	Wheel squeal	On tight curves.
	Auxiliary equipment	When stopped.
	Horns and crossing bells	At grade crossings.
	<i>In general</i>	Lower speeds mean less noise than for RRT and LRT on exclusive right-of-way.
Commuter Rail	Diesel exhaust	On diesel-hauled trains.
	Cooling fans	On both diesel and electric-powered trains.
	Wheel/rail interaction	Depends on condition of wheels and rails.
	Horns and crossing gate bells	At grade crossings.
	<i>In general</i>	Noise is usually dominated by locomotives and horns at grade crossings.
Low and Intermediate Capacity Transit	Propulsion systems, including speed controllers	At low speeds.
	Ventilation systems	At low speeds.
	Tire/guideway interaction	For rubber-tired vehicles, including monorails.
	Wheel/rail interaction	Depends on condition of wheels and rails.
	<i>In general</i>	Wide range of vehicles: monorail, rubber-tired, steel wheeled, linear induction. Noise characteristics depend upon type.
Diesel Buses	Cooling fans	While idling.
	Engine casing	While idling.
	Diesel exhaust	At low speeds and while accelerating.
	Tire/roadway interaction	At moderate and high speeds.
	<i>In general</i>	Includes city buses (generally two axle) and commuter buses (generally three axle).
Electric Buses and Trackless Trolleys	Tire/roadway interaction	At moderate speeds.
	Electric traction motors	At moderate speeds.
	<i>In general</i>	Much quieter than diesel buses.

Table 2-1. Sources of Transit Noise (continued)		
Vehicle or Facility	Dominant Components	Comments
Bus Storage Yards	Buses starting up	Usually in early morning.
	Buses accelerating	Usually near entrances/exits.
	Buses idling	Warm-up areas
	<i>In general</i>	Site specific. Often peak periods with significant noise.
Rail Transit Storage Yards	Wheel squeal	On tight curves.
	Wheel impacts	On joints and switches.
	Wheel rolling noise	On tangent track
	Auxiliary equipment	Throughout day and night. Includes air-release noise.
	Coupling/uncoupling	On storage tracks
	Signal horns	Throughout yard site
	<i>In general</i>	Site specific. Often early morning and peak periods with significant noise.
Maintenance Facilities	Signal horns	Throughout facility
	PA systems	Throughout facility
	Impact tools	Shop buildings
	Car/bus washers/driers	Wash facility
	Vehicle activity	Throughout facility
	<i>In general</i>	Site specific. Considerable activity throughout day and night, some outside.
Stations	Automobiles	Patron arrival/departure, especially in early morning.
	Buses idling	Bus loading zone
	P.A. systems	Platform area
	Locomotive idling	At commuter rail terminal stations.
	Auxiliary systems	At terminal stations and layover facilities.
	<i>In general</i>	Site specific, with peak activity periods.
Subways	Fans	Noise through vent shafts.
	Buses/trains in tunnels	Noise through vent shafts.
	<i>In general</i>	Noise is not a problem.

2.3 PATHS OF TRANSIT NOISE, FROM SOURCE TO RECEIVER

This section contains a qualitative overview of noise-path characteristics from source to receiver, including attenuation along these paths. Equations for specific noise-level attenuations along source-receiver paths appear in Chapters 5 and 6.

Sound paths from source to receiver are predominantly through the air. Along these paths, sound reduces with distance due to (1) divergence, (2) absorption/diffusion and (3) shielding. These mechanisms of sound attenuation are discussed below.

Divergence. Sound levels naturally attenuate due to distance, as shown in Figure 2-6. Plotted vertically is the attenuation at the receiver, relative to the sound level 50 feet from the source. As shown, the sound level attenuates with increasing distance. Such attenuation, technically called "divergence," depends upon source configuration and source-emission characteristics. For sources grouped closely together (called point sources), attenuation with distance is large: 6 decibels per doubling of distance. Point sources include crossing signals along rail corridors, PA systems in maintenance yards and other closely grouped sources of noise. For vehicles passing along a track or roadway (called line sources), divergence with distance is less: 3 decibels per doubling of distance for L_{eq} and L_{dn} , and 3 to 6 decibels per doubling of distance for L_{max} . In Figure 2-6, the line source curve separates into three separate lines for L_{max} , with the point of departure depending on the length of the line source. These three noise descriptors – L_{eq} , L_{dn} and L_{max} – are discussed in Section 2.5. Equations for the curves in Figure 2-6 appear in Chapter 6.

Absorption/Diffusion. In addition to distance alone, sound levels are further attenuated when sound paths lie close to freshly-plowed or vegetation-covered ground. Plotted vertically in Figure 2-7 is this additional attenuation, which can be as large as 5 decibels as close in as several hundred feet. At very large distances, wind and temperature gradients sometimes modify the ground attenuation shown here; such variable atmospheric effects are not included in this manual because they generally occur beyond the range of typical transit-noise impact. Equations for the curves in this figure appear in Chapter 6.

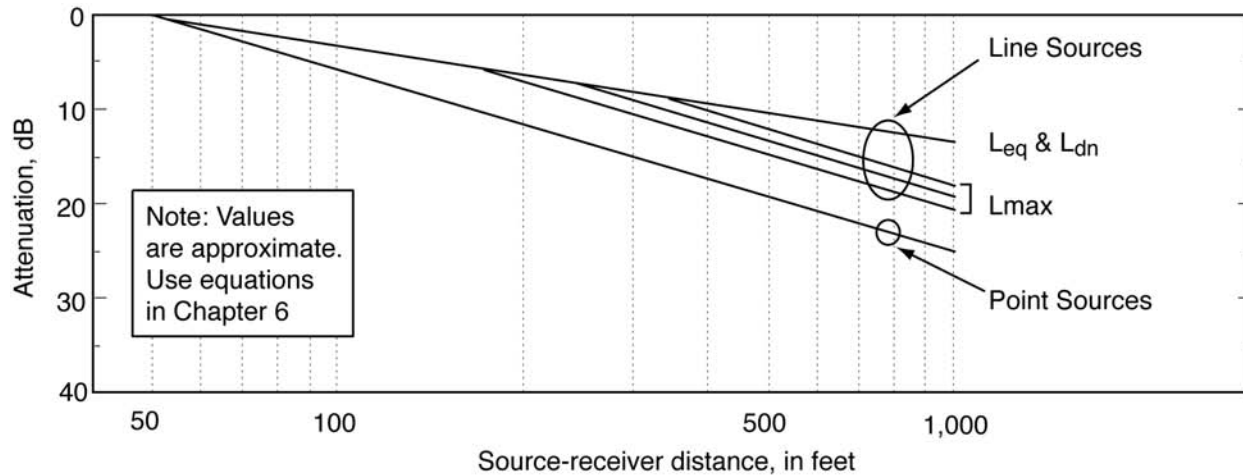


Figure 2-6. Attenuation due to Distance (divergence)

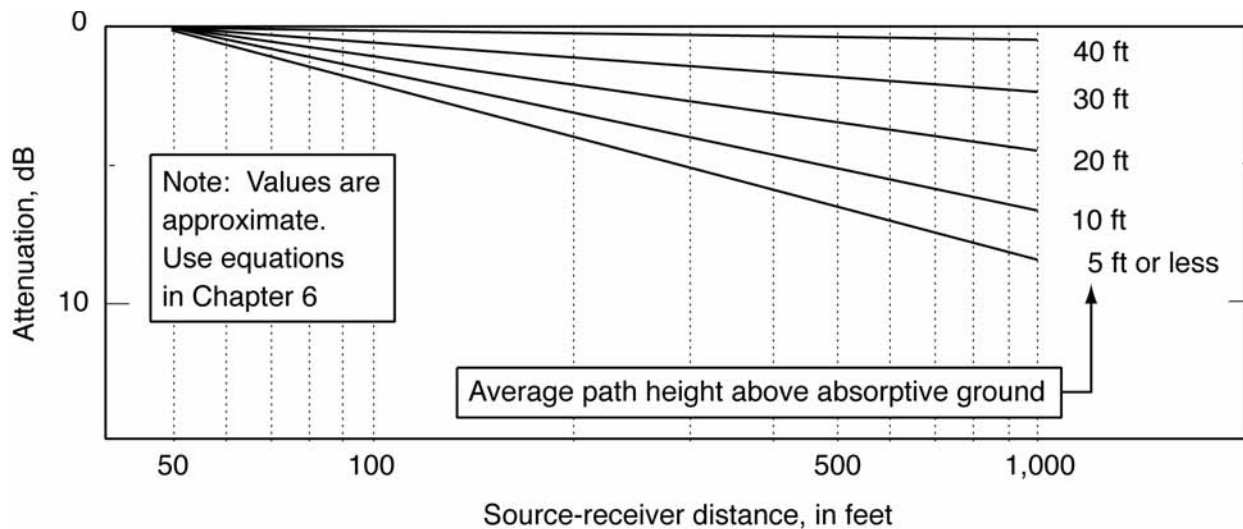


Figure 2-7. Attenuation due to Soft Ground

Shielding. Sound paths are sometimes interrupted by man-made noise barriers, by terrain, by rows of buildings, or by vegetation. Most important of these path interruptions are noise barriers, one of the best means of mitigating noise in sensitive areas. A noise barrier reduces sound levels at a receiver by breaking the direct line-of-sight between source and receiver with a solid wall (in contrast to vegetation, which hides the source but does not reduce sound levels significantly). Sound energy reaches the receiver only by

bending (diffracting) over the top of the barrier, as shown in Figure 2-8, and this diffraction reduces the sound level at the receiver.

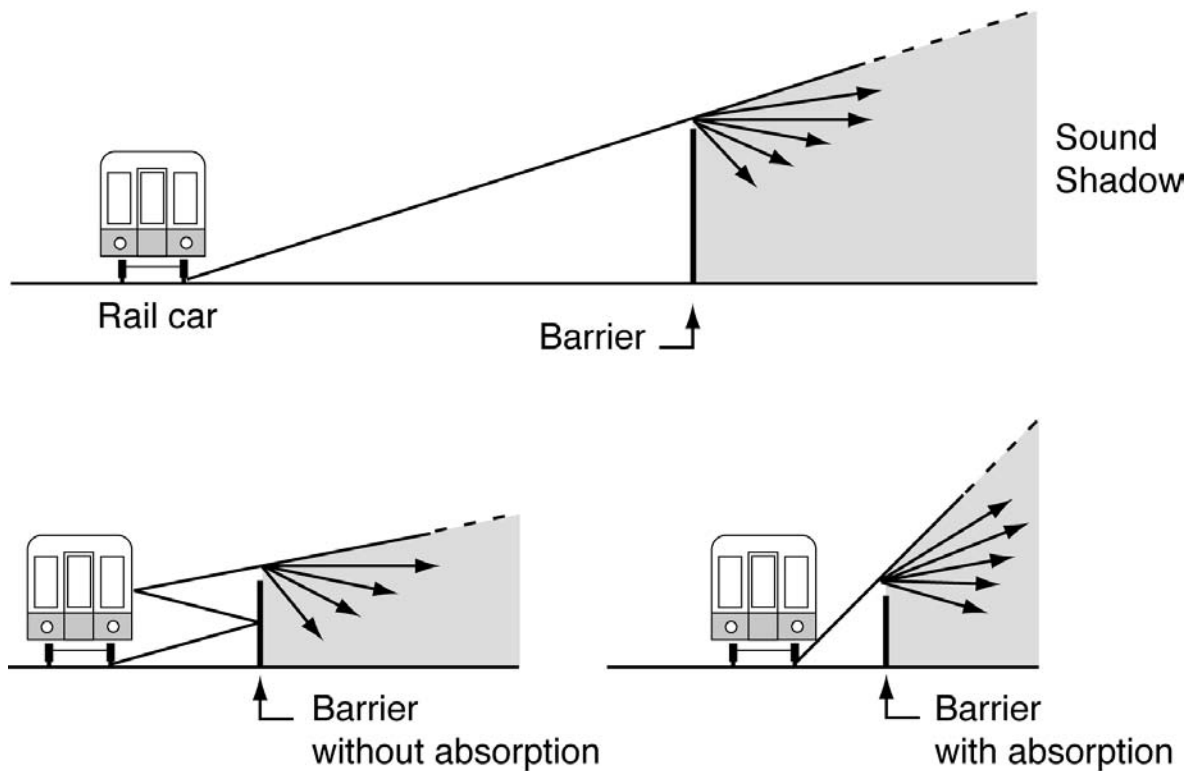


Figure 2-8. Noise Barrier Geometry

Sound barriers for transportation systems are typically used to attenuate noise at the receiver by 5 to 15 decibels, depending upon barrier height, length, and distance from both source and receiver. Barriers on structure, very close-in to the source, sometimes provide less attenuation than do barriers slightly more distant from the source, due to reverberation (multiple reflections) between the barrier and the body of the vehicle. However, this reverberation is often offset by increased barrier height, which is easy to obtain for such close-in barriers, and/or acoustical absorption on the source side of the barrier. Acoustical absorption is included as a mitigation option in Chapter 6. Equations for barrier attenuation, plus equations for other sound-path interruptions, also appear in Chapter 6.

Sometimes a portion of the source-to-receiver path is not through the air, but rather through the ground or through structural components of the receiver's building. Discussion of such ground-borne and structure-borne propagation is included in Chapter 7.

2.4 RECEIVER RESPONSE TO TRANSIT NOISE

This section contains an overview of receiver response to noise. It serves as background information for the noise impact criteria in Chapter 3.

Noise can interrupt ongoing activities and can result in community annoyance, especially in residential areas.

In general, most residents become highly annoyed when noise interferes significantly with activities such as sleeping, talking, noise-sensitive work, and listening to radio or TV or music. In addition, some land uses, such as outdoor concert pavilions, are inherently incompatible with high noise levels.

Annoyance to noise has been investigated and approximate dose-response relationships have been quantified by the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA).⁽¹⁾ The selection of noise descriptors in this manual is largely based upon this EPA work. Beginning in the 1970s, the EPA undertook a number of research and synthesis studies relating to community noise of all types. Results of these studies have been widely published, and discussed and refereed by many professionals in acoustics. Basic conclusions of these studies have been adopted by the Federal Interagency Committee on Noise, the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), the American National Standards Institute, and even internationally.⁽²⁾⁽³⁾⁽⁴⁾⁽⁵⁾ Conclusions from this seminal EPA work remain scientifically valid to this day.

Figure 2-9 contains a synthesis of actual case studies of community reaction to newly introduced sources of noise in a residential urban neighborhood.⁽⁶⁾ Plotted horizontally in the figure is the new noise's excess above existing noise levels. Both the new and existing noise levels are expressed as Day-Night Sound Levels, L_{dn} , discussed in Section 2.5. Plotted vertically is the community reaction to this newly introduced noise. As shown in the figure, community reaction varies from "No Reaction" to "Vigorous Action," for newly introduced noises averaging from "10 decibels below existing" to "25 decibels above existing." Note that these data points apply only when the stated assumptions are true. For other conditions, the points shift to the right or left somewhat.

In a large number of community attitudinal surveys, transportation noise has been ranked among the most significant causes of community dissatisfaction. A synthesis of many such surveys on annoyance appears in Figure 2-10.⁽⁷⁾⁽⁸⁾ Plotted horizontally are different neighborhood noise exposures. Plotted vertically is the percentage of people who are *highly annoyed* by their particular level of neighborhood noise. As shown in the figure, the percentage of high annoyance is approximately 0 percent at 45 decibels, 10 percent around 60 decibels and increases quite rapidly to approximately 70 percent around 85 decibels. The scatter about the synthesis line is due to variation from community to community and to some wording differences in the various surveys. A recent update of the original research, containing several additional railroad, transit and street traffic noise surveys, has not significantly changed the shape of the original Schultz curve.⁽⁸⁾⁽⁹⁾

Community Reaction

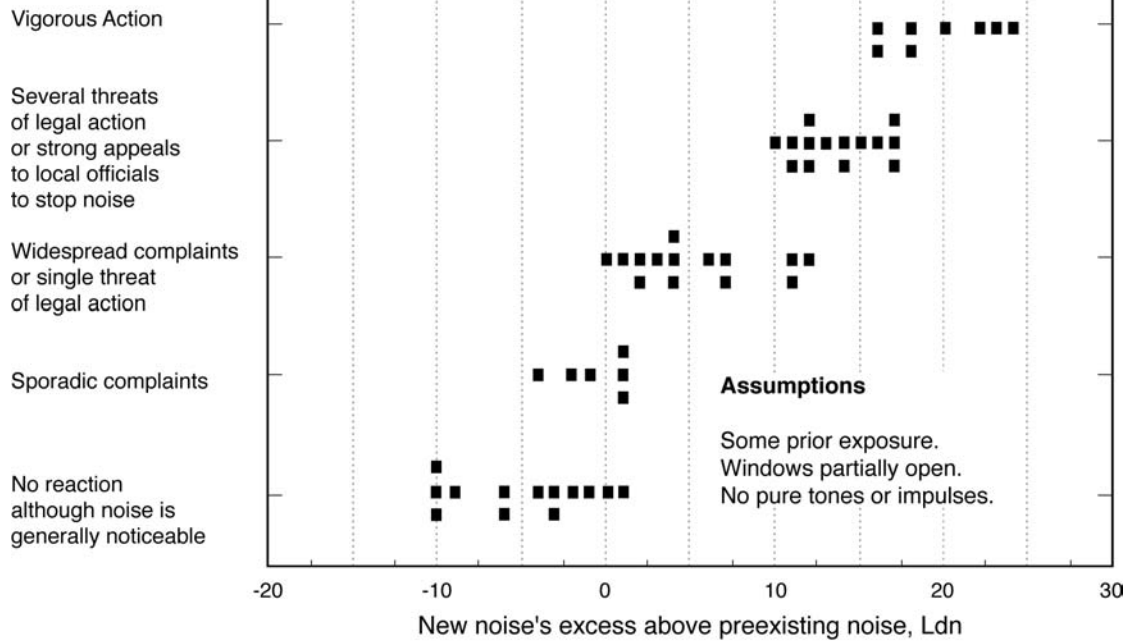


Figure 2-9. Community Reaction to New Noise, Relative to Existing Noise In a Residential Urban Environment

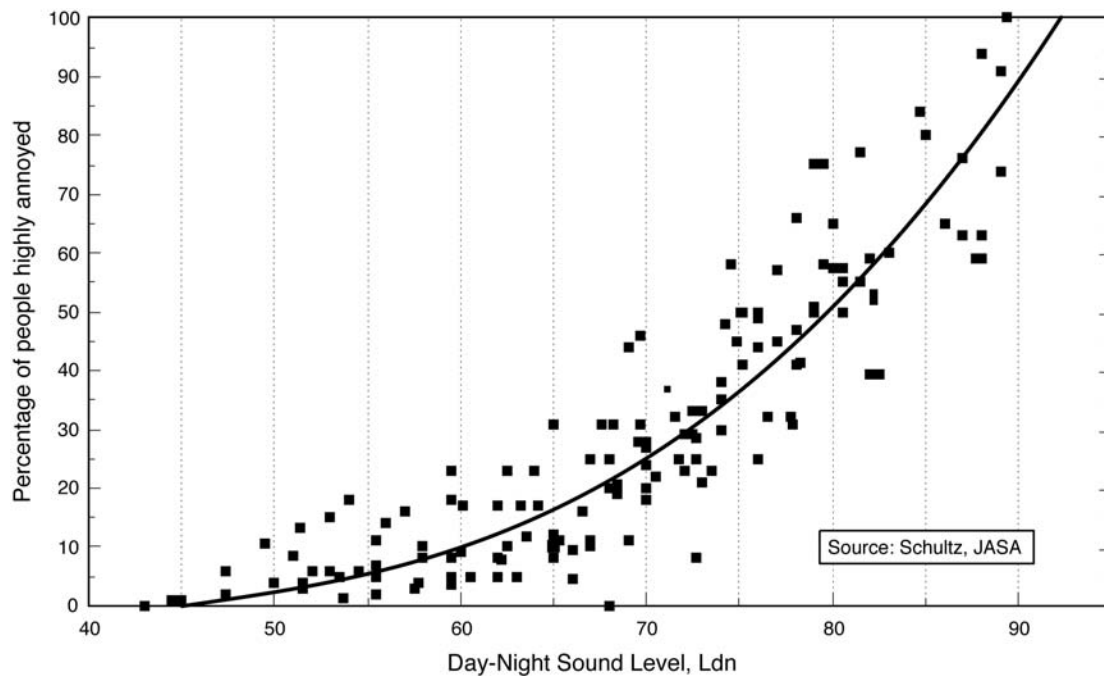


Figure 2-10. Community Annoyance Due to Noise

As indicated by these two figures, introduction of transit noise into a community may have two undesirable effects. First, it may significantly increase existing noise levels in the community, levels to which residents have mostly become accustomed. This effect is called "relative" noise impact. Evaluation of this effect is "relative" to existing noise levels; relative criteria are based upon noise increases above existing levels. Second, newly introduced transit noise may interfere with community activities, independent of existing noise levels; it may be simply too loud to converse or to sleep. This effect is called "absolute" noise impact, because it is expressed as a fixed level not to be exceeded and is independent of existing noise levels. Both these effects, relative and absolute, enter the assessment of transit noise impact in Chapters 4, 5 and 6. These two types of impact, relative and absolute, are merged into the transit noise criteria of Chapter 3.

2.5 DESCRIPTORS FOR TRANSIT NOISE

This manual uses the following single-number descriptors for transit-noise measurements, computations, and assessment. The terminology is consistent with common usage in the United States. For comparison with national standard terminology, see Appendix A.

The *A-weighted Sound Level*, which describes a receiver's noise at any moment in time.

The *Maximum Sound Level* (L_{max}) during a single noise event.

The *Sound Exposure Level* (*SEL*), which describes a receiver's cumulative noise exposure from a single noise event.

The *Hourly Equivalent Sound Level* ($L_{eq}(h)$), which describes a receiver's cumulative noise exposure from all events over a one-hour period.

The *Day-Night Average Sound Level* (L_{dn}), which describes a receiver's cumulative noise exposure from all events over a full 24 hours, with events between 10pm and 7am increased by 10 decibels to account for greater nighttime sensitivity to noise.

This section illustrates all of these noise descriptors, in turn, and describes their particular application in this manual. Emphasized here are graphic illustrations rather than mathematical definitions to help the reader gain understanding and to see the interrelationships among descriptors.

2.5.1 A-weighted Sound Level: The Basic Noise Unit

The basic noise unit for transit noise is the A-weighted Sound Level. It describes a receiver's noise at any moment in time and is read directly from noise-monitoring equipment, with the "weighting switch" set on "A." Figure 2-11 shows some typical A-weighted Sound Levels for both transit and non-transit sources.

As is apparent from Figure 2-11, typical A-weighted Sound Levels range from the 30s to the 90s, where 30 is very quiet and 90 is very loud. The scale in the figure is labeled "dBA" to denote the way A-weighted Sound Levels are typically written, for example, 80 dBA. The letter "A" indicates that the sound has been filtered to

reduce the strength of very low and very high-frequency sounds, as described in Section 2.1. Without this A-weighting, noise-monitoring equipment would respond to events people cannot hear, events such as high-frequency dog whistles and low-frequency seismic disturbances. On the average, each A-weighted sound level increase of 10 decibels corresponds to an approximate doubling of subjective loudness. Other frequency weighting such as B, C, and linear weights have been used to filter sound for specific applications.

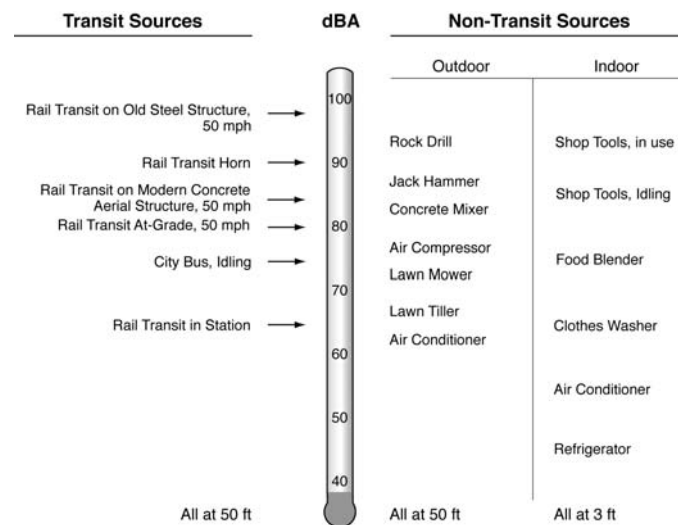


Figure 2-11. Typical A-weighted Sound Levels

A-weighted sound levels are adopted here as the basic noise unit because: (1) they can be easily measured, (2) they approximate our ear's sensitivity to sounds of different frequencies, (3) they match attitudinal-survey tests of annoyance better than do other basic units, (4) they have been in use since the early 1930s, and (5) they are endorsed as the proper basic unit for environmental noise by nearly every agency concerned with community noise throughout the world.

2.5.2 Maximum Sound Level (L_{max}) During a Single Noise Event

As a transit vehicle approaches, passes by, and then recedes into the distance, the A-weighted sound level rises, reaches a maximum, and then fades into the background noise. The maximum A-weighted sound level reached during this passby is called the Maximum Sound Level, abbreviated here as " L_{max} ." For noise compliance tests of transient sources, such as moving transit vehicles under controlled conditions with smooth wheel and rail conditions, L_{max} is typically measured with the sound level meter's switch set on "fast." However, for tests of continuous or stationary transit sources, and for the general assessment of transit noise impact, it is usually more appropriate to use the "slow" setting. When set on "slow," sound level meters

ignore some of the very transient fluctuations, which are unimportant to people's overall assessment of the noise. $L_{\max}$ is illustrated in Figure 2-12, where time is plotted horizontally and A-weighted sound level is plotted vertically.

Because $L_{\max}$ is commonly used in vehicle-noise specifications and because it is commonly measured for individual vehicles, equations are included in Appendices E and F to convert between $L_{\max}$ and the cumulative descriptors discussed below. However, $L_{\max}$ is not used as the descriptor for transit environmental noise impact assessment for several reasons. $L_{\max}$ ignores the number and duration of transit events, which are important to people's reaction to noise, and cannot be totalled into a one-hour or a 24-hour cumulative measure of impact. Moreover, the $L_{\max}$ is not conducive to comparison among different transportation modes.

For example, noise descriptors used in highway noise assessments are L_{eq} and L_{10} , the noise level exceeded for 10 percent of the peak hour.

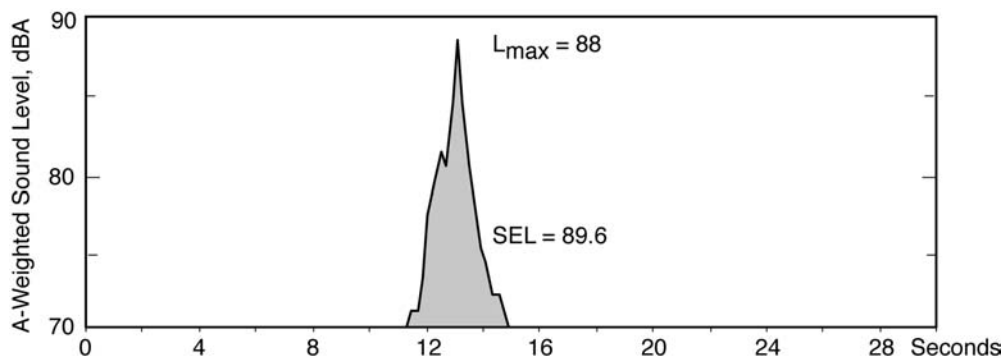


Figure 2-12. Typical Transit-Vehicle Passby

2.5.3 Sound Exposure Level (SEL): The Cumulative Exposure from a Single Noise Event

Shaded in Figure 2-12 is the noise "exposure" during a transit-vehicle passby. This exposure represents the total amount of sound energy that enters the receiver's ears (or the measurement microphone) during the vehicle passby. Figure 2-13 shows another noise event – this one within a fixed-transit facility as a transit bus is started, warmed up, and then driven away. For this event, the noise exposure is large due to *duration*.

The quantitative measure of the noise exposure for single noise events is the Sound Exposure Level, abbreviated here as "SEL" and shaded in both these figures. The fact that SEL is a cumulative measure means that (1) louder events have greater SELs than do quieter ones, and (2) events that last longer in time have greater SELs than do shorter ones. People react to the duration of noise events, judging longer events to be more annoying than shorter ones, assuming equal maximum A-Levels. Mathematically, the Sound Exposure Level is computed as:

$$SEL = 10 \log_{10} \left[\frac{\text{Total sound energy}}{\text{during the event}} \right]$$

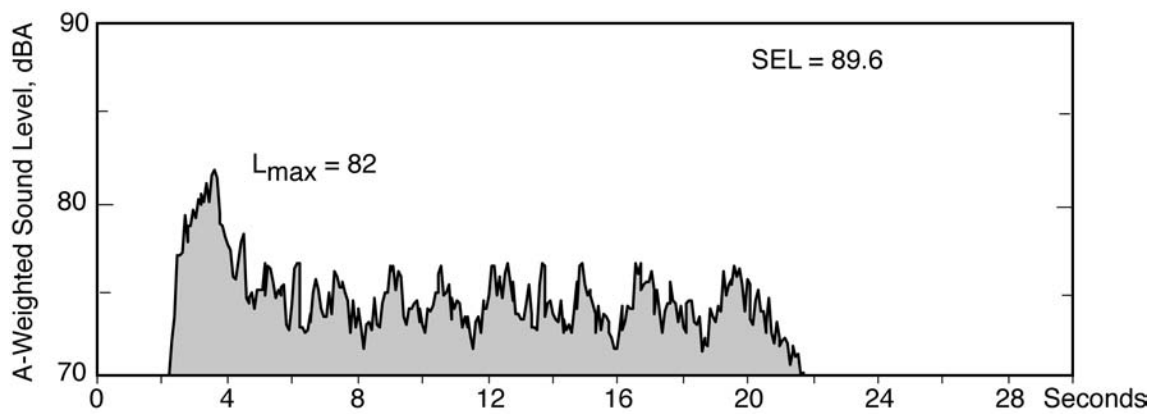


Figure 2-13. Typical Fixed-Facility Noise Event

Figure 2-14 repeats the previous time histories, but with a stretched vertical scale. The stretched scale corresponds to sound "energy" at any moment in time. Mathematically, sound energy is proportional to 10 raised to the $(L/10)$ power, that is, $10^{(L/10)}$. The vertical scale has been stretched in this way because noise is "energy" exposure. Only in this way do the shaded zones properly correspond to the noise exposures that underlie the SEL. Note that the shaded zones in the two frames have equal numerical areas, corresponding to equal SELs for these two very different noise events.

Each frame of the figure also contains a tall, thin shaded zone of one-second duration. This tall zone is another way to envision SELs. Think of the original shaded zone being squeezed shorter and shorter in time, while retaining the same numerical area. As its duration is squeezed, its height must increase to keep the area constant. If an SEL shading is squeezed to a duration of one second, its height will then equal its SEL value; mathematically, its area is now $10^{(L/10)}$ times one second. Note that the resulting height of the squeezed zone depends both upon the L_{max} and the duration of the event -- that is, upon the total area under the original, time-varying A-Level. Often this type of "squeezing" helps communicate the meaning of SELs and noise doses to the reader.

SEL is used in this manual as the cumulative measure of each single transit-noise event because unlike L_{max} :

- (1) SEL increases with the duration of a noise event, which is important to people's reaction,
- (2) SEL, therefore, allows a uniform assessment method for both transit-vehicle passbys and fixed-facility noise events,
- and (3) SEL can be used to calculate the one-hour and 24-hour cumulative descriptors discussed below.

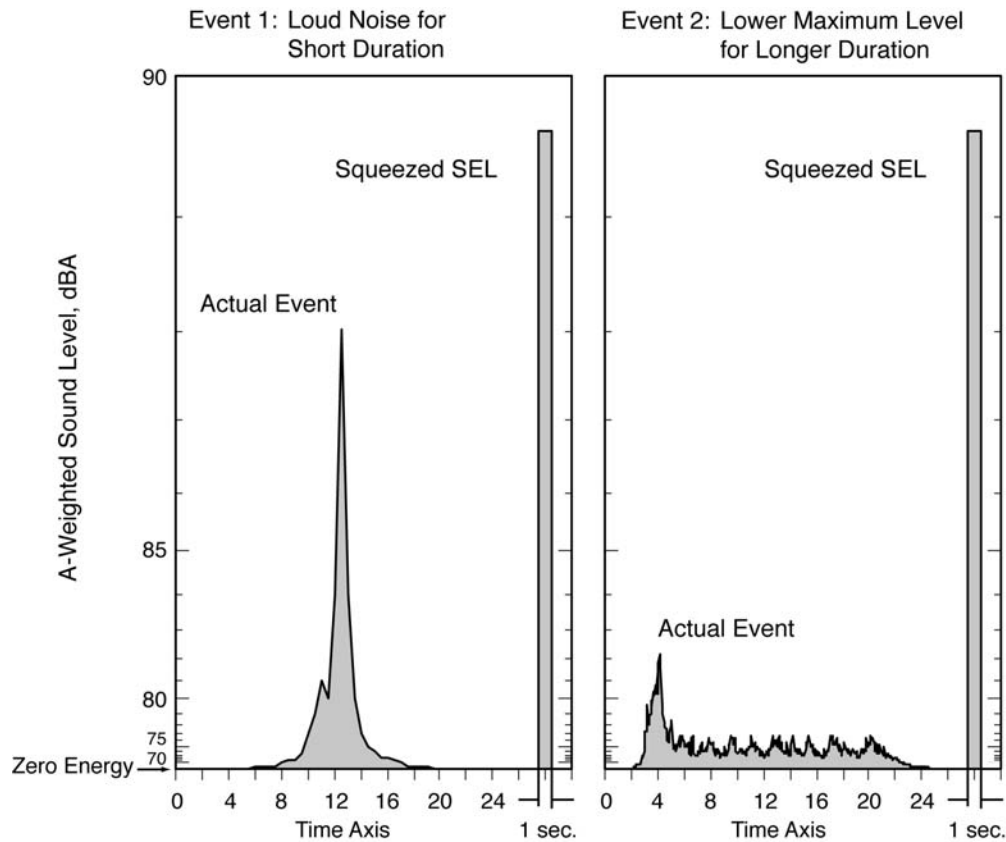


Figure 2-14. An “Energy” View of Noise Events

2.5.4 Hourly Equivalent Sound Level ($L_{eq}(h)$)

The descriptor for cumulative one-hour exposure is the Hourly Equivalent Sound Level, abbreviated here as " $L_{eq}(h)$." It is an hourly measure that accounts for the moment-to-moment fluctuations in A-weighted sound levels due to all sound sources during that hour, combined. Sound fluctuation is illustrated in the upper frame of Figure 2-15 for a single noise event such as a train passing on nearby tracks. As the train approaches, passes by, and then recedes into the distance, the A-weighted Sound Level rises, reaches a maximum, and then fades into the background noise. The area under the curve in this upper frame is the receiver's noise dose over this five-minute period.

The center frame of the figure shows sound level fluctuations over the one-hour period that includes the five-minute period from the upper frame. Now the area under the curve represents the noise exposure for one hour. Mathematically, the Hourly Equivalent Sound Level is computed as:

$$L_{eq}(hour) = 10 \log_{10} \left[\frac{\text{Total sound energy}}{\text{during one hour}} \right] - 35.6$$

Sound energy is totaled here over a full hour; it accumulates from all noise events during that hour. Subtraction of 35.6 from this one-hour sound exposure converts it into a time average, as explained in Section 2.5.6. In brief, if the actual fluctuating noise were replaced by a constant noise equal to this average value, the same total sound energy would enter the receiver's ears. This type of average value is "equivalent" in that sense to the actual fluctuating noise.

A useful, alternative way of computing L_{eq} due to a series of transit-noise events is:

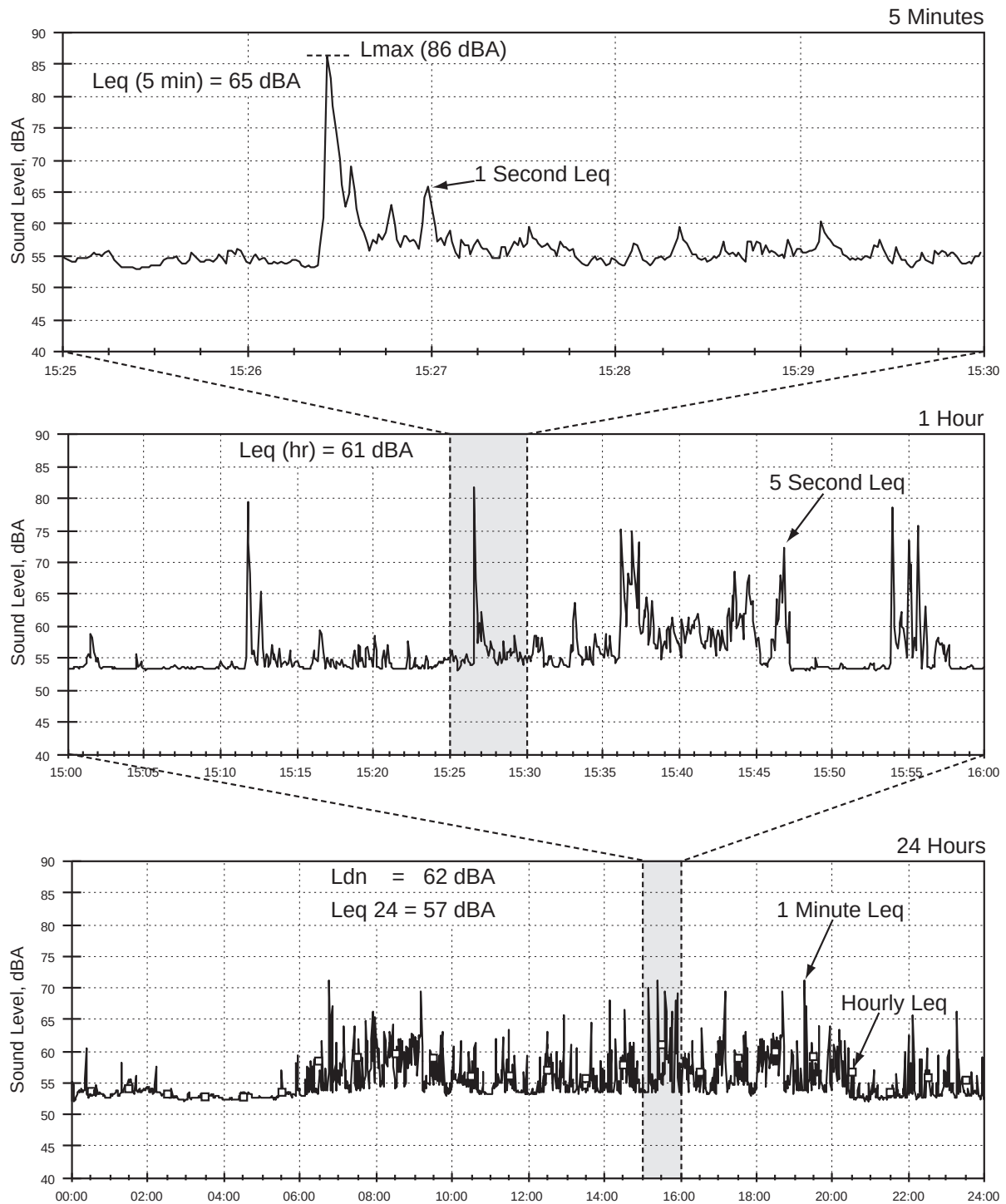
$$L_{eq} (hour) = 10 \log_{10} \left[\frac{\text{Energy Sum of}}{\text{all SELs}} \right] - 35.6$$

This equation concentrates on the cumulative contribution of individual noise events, and is the fundamental equation incorporated into Chapters 5 and 6.

The bottom frame of Figure 2-15 shows the sound level fluctuations over a full 24-hour period. It is discussed in Section 2.5.5.

Figure 2-16 shows some typical hourly L_{eq} 's, both for transit and non-transit sources. As is apparent from the figure, typical hourly L_{eq} 's range from the 40s to the 80s. Note that these L_{eq} 's depend upon the number of events during the hour and also upon each event's duration, which is affected by vehicle speed. Doubling the number of events during the hour will increase the L_{eq} by 3 decibels, as will doubling the duration of each individual event.

Hourly L_{eq} is adopted here as the measure of cumulative noise impact for non-residential land uses (those not involving sleep) because: (1) L_{eq} 's correlate well with speech interference in conversation and on the telephone – as well as interruption of TV, radio and music enjoyment, (2) L_{eq} 's increase with the duration of transit events, which is important to people's reaction, (3) L_{eq} 's take into account the number of transit events over the hour, which is also important to people's reaction, and (4) L_{eq} 's are used by the Federal Highway Administration in assessing highway-traffic noise impact. Thus, this noise descriptor can be used for comparing and contrasting highway, transit and multi-modal alternatives. L_{eq} is computed for the loudest facility hour during noise-sensitive activity at each particular non-residential land use. Section 2.5.6 contains more detail in support of L_{eq} as the adopted descriptor for cumulative noise impact for non-residential land uses.



Typical A-weighted Sound Level Variation over a 24-Hour Period

Figure 2-15. Example A-weighted Sound Level Time Histories

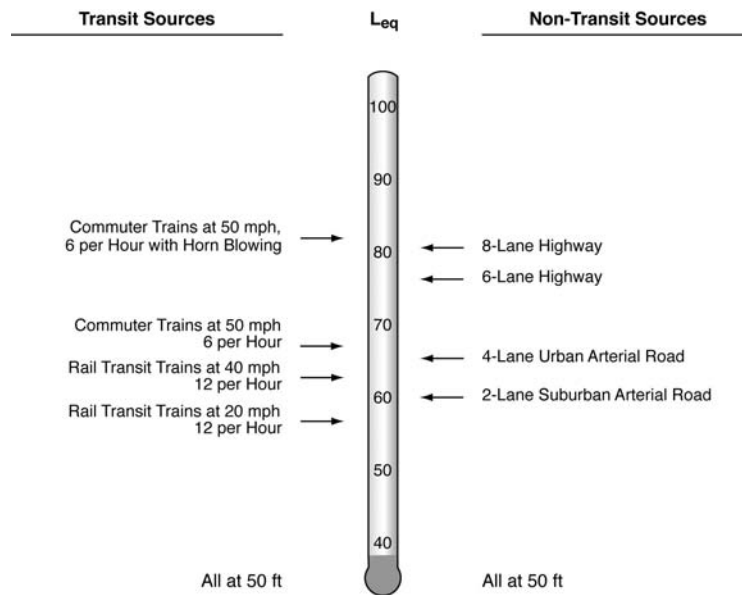


Figure 2-16. Typical Hourly L_{eq} 's

2.5.5 Day-Night Sound Level (L_{dn}): The Cumulative 24-Hour Exposure from All Events

The descriptor for cumulative 24-hour exposure is the Day-Night Sound Level, abbreviated here as " L_{dn} ." It is a 24-hour measure that accounts for the moment-to-moment fluctuations in A-Levels due to all sound sources during 24 hours, combined. Such fluctuations are illustrated in the bottom frame of Figure 2-15. Here the area under the curve represents the receiver's noise dose over a full 24 hours. Note that some vehicle passbys occur at night in the figure, when the background noise is less. Mathematically, the Day-Night Level is computed as:

$$L_{dn} = 10 \log_{10} \left[\frac{\text{Total sound energy during 24 hours}}{\text{}} \right] - 49.4$$

where nighttime noise (10pm to 7am) is increased by 10 decibels before totaling.

Sound energy is totaled over a full 24 hours; it accumulates from all noise events during that 24 hours. Subtraction of 49.4 from this 24-hour dose converts it into a type of "average," as explained in Section 2.5.6. In brief, if the actual fluctuating noise were replaced by a constant noise equal to this average value, the same total sound energy would enter the receiver's ears.

An alternative way of computing L_{dn} from twenty-four hourly L_{eq} 's is:

$$L_{dn} = 10 \log_{10} \left[\frac{\text{Energy sum of 24 hourly } L_{eq}\text{'s}}{\text{}} \right] - 13.8$$

where nighttime L_{eq} 's are increased by 10 decibels before totaling, as in the previous equation. L_{dn} due to a series of transit-noise events can also be computed as:

$$L_{dn} = 10 \log_{10} \left[\frac{\text{Energy sum of}}{\text{all SELs}} \right] - 49.4$$

assuming that transit noise dominates the 24-hour noise environment. Here again, nighttime SELs are increased by 10 decibels before totaling. This last equation concentrates upon individual noise events, and is the equation incorporated into Chapters 5 and 6.

Figure 2-17 shows some typical L_{dn} 's, both for transit and non-transit sources. As is apparent from the figure, typical L_{dn} 's range from the 50s to the 70s – where 50 is a quiet 24-hour period and 70 is an extremely loud one. Note that these L_{dn} 's depend upon the number of events during day and night separately – and also upon each event's duration, which is affected by vehicle speed.

L_{dn} is adopted here as the measure of cumulative noise impact for residential land uses (those involving sleep), because: (1) L_{dn} correlates well with the results of attitudinal surveys of residential noise impact, (2) L_{dn} 's increase with the duration of transit events, which is important to people's reaction, (3) L_{dn} 's take into account the number of transit events over the full twenty-four hours, which is also important to people's reaction, (4) L_{dn} 's take into account the increased sensitivity to noise at night, when most people are asleep, (5) L_{dn} 's allow composite measurements to capture all sources of community noise combined, (6) L_{dn} 's allow quantitative comparison of transit noise with all other community noises, (7) L_{dn} is the designated metric of choice of other Federal agencies (Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), Federal Aviation Administration (FAA), Environmental Protection Agency (EPA)) and also has wide acceptance internationally. Section 2.4.6 contains more detail in support of L_{dn} as the adopted descriptor for cumulative noise impact for residential land uses.

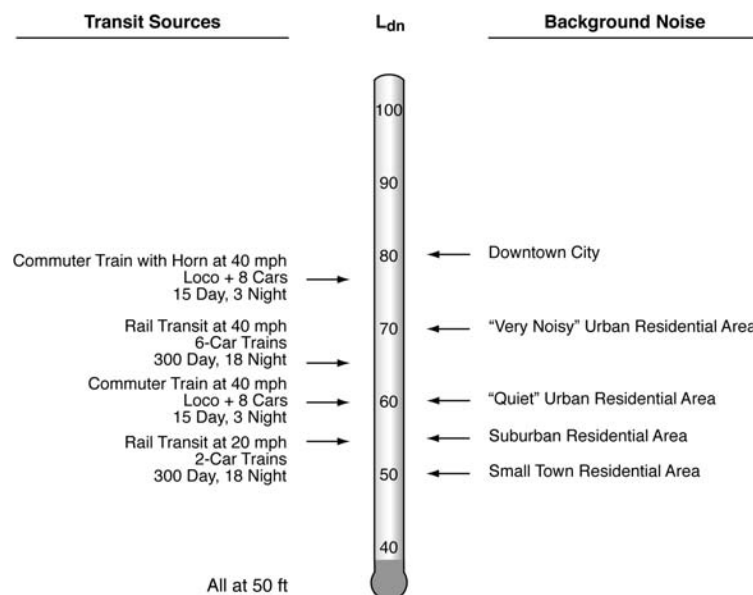


Figure 2-17. Typical L_{dn} 's

2.5.6 A Noise-Exposure Analogy for L_{eq} and L_{dn}

In Figure 2-15, the area under the curves represents noise exposure. An analogy between rainfall and noise is sometimes helpful to further explain these noise exposures.

The one-hour noise time history in the middle frame of the figure is analogous to one hour of rainfall, that is, the total accumulation of rain over this one-hour period. Note that every rain shower increases the one-hour accumulation. Also, note that heavier showers increase the amount more than do lighter ones, and longer showers increase the amount more than shorter ones. The same is true for noise: (1) every transit event increases the one-hour noise exposure; (2) loud events increase the noise exposure more than do quieter ones; and (3) events that stretch out longer in time increase the noise exposure more than shorter ones.

Unfortunately, the word "average" leaves many people with the impression that the maximum levels which attract their attention are being devalued or ignored. They are not. Just as all the rain that falls in the rain gauge in one hour counts toward the total, all sounds are included in the one-hour noise exposure that underlies L_{eq} and in the 24-hour noise exposure that underlies L_{dn} . None of the noise is being ignored, even though the L_{eq} and L_{dn} are often numerically lower than many maximum A-weighted Sound Levels. Noise exposure includes all transit events, all noise levels that occur during their time periods -- without exception. Every added event, even the quiet ones, will increase the noise exposure, and therefore increase L_{eq} and L_{dn} .

Neither the L_{eq} nor the L_{dn} is an "average" in the normal sense of the word, where introduction of a quiet event would pull down the average. Furthermore, similar to the effect of rainfall in watering a field or garden, scientific evidence strongly indicates that total noise exposure is the truest measure of noise impact. Neither the moment-to-moment rain rate nor the moment-to-moment A-level is a good measure of long-term effects.

Why not just compute transit noise impact on the basis of the highest L_{max} of the day, for example, as "loudest L_{max} equals 90 dBA?" If that were done, then there would be no difference in noise impact between a main trunk line and a suburban branch line; one passby per day would be no better than 100 per day, if the loudest level remained unchanged. Clearly such a reduction in number-of-passbys is a true benefit, so it should reduce the numerical measure of impact. It does with L_{eq} and L_{dn} , but not with L_{max} . In addition, if assessments were made just on the loudest passby, then one passby at 90 dBA would be worse than 100 passbys at 89 dBA. Clearly this is not true. Both L_{eq} and L_{dn} increase with the number of passbys, while L_{max} does not. Both the L_{eq} and the L_{dn} combine the number of passbys with each passby's L_{max} and duration, all into a cumulative noise exposure, with mathematics that make sense from an annoyance point of view. L_{eq} and L_{dn} mathematics produce results that correlate well with independent tests of noise annoyance from all types of noise sources.

In terms of individual passbys, here are some characteristics of both the L_{eq} and the L_{dn} :

When passby L_{max} 's increase:	→ Both L_{eq} and L_{dn} increase
When passby durations increase:	→ Both L_{eq} and L_{dn} increase
When the number of passbys increases:	→ Both L_{eq} and L_{dn} increase
When some operations shift to louder vehicles:	→ Both L_{eq} and L_{dn} increase
When passbys shift from day to night:	→ L_{dn} increases

All of these increases in L_{eq} and L_{dn} correlate to increases in community annoyance.

2.5.7 Summary of Noise Descriptors

In summary, the following noise descriptors are adopted in this manual for the computation and assessment of transit noise:

The **A-weighted Sound Level**, which describes a receiver's noise at any moment in time. It is adopted here as the basic noise unit, and underlies all the noise descriptors below.

The **Maximum Level (L_{max})** during a single noise event. The L_{max} descriptor is not recommended for transit noise impact assessment, but because it is commonly used in vehicle noise specifications and because it is commonly measured for individual vehicles, equations are included in Appendices E and F to convert between L_{max} and the cumulative descriptors adopted here.

The **Sound Exposure Level (SEL)**, which describes a receiver's cumulative noise exposure from a single noise event. It is adopted here as the primary descriptor for the measurement of transit vehicle noise emissions, and as an intermediate descriptor in the measurement and calculation of both L_{eq} and L_{dn} .

The **Hourly Equivalent Sound Level ($L_{eq}(h)$)**, which describes a receiver's cumulative noise exposure from all events over a one-hour period. It is adopted here to assess transit noise for non-residential land uses. For assessment, L_{eq} is computed for the loudest transit facility hour during the hours of noise-sensitive activity.

The **Day-Night Sound Level (L_{dn})**, which describes a receiver's cumulative noise exposure from all events over a full 24 hours. It may be thought of as a noise dose, totaled after increasing all nighttime A-Levels (between 10pm and 7am) by 10 decibels. Every noise event during the 24-hour period increases this dose, louder ones more than quieter ones, and ones that stretch out in time more than shorter ones. L_{dn} is adopted here to assess transit noise for residential land uses.

REFERENCES

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3. NOISE IMPACT CRITERIA

This chapter presents the criteria to be used in evaluating noise impact from mass transit projects. Different approaches are taken depending on the type of project and the agencies involved. In general terms, these criteria describe the noise environment considered acceptable for a given situation. Because some projects are strictly transit projects while other projects are basically highway projects that include a transit component, two different sets of criteria are required as follows:

- **Rail and Bus Facilities:** This category includes all rail projects (e.g., rail rapid transit, light rail transit, commuter rail, and automated guideway transit), as well as fixed facilities such as storage and maintenance yards, passenger stations and terminals, parking facilities, substations, etc. Also included are rail transit projects built within a highway or railroad corridor. Certain bus facilities are included in this category, such as bus rapid transit (BRT) on separate roadways and bus operations on local streets and highways where the project does not include roadway construction or modification that significantly changes roadway capacity. The distinguishing feature in all these cases is that the existing noise levels generated by roadway traffic and other sources will not change as a result of the project; therefore the project noise is exclusively due to the new transit sources. For projects like these, FTA is generally the lead agency and the methodology from this manual is the appropriate approach.
- **Highway/Transit Projects:** Projects in this category involve transit as part of new highway construction or modifications to existing highways to increase carrying capacity. For these multi-modal projects, the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) may be a joint lead agency with FTA, and the state department of transportation (DOT) would probably also be participating in the environmental impact assessment. Projects would involve traffic lanes with preferential treatment for buses or high-occupancy vehicles (HOVs). The distinguishing feature here is that the *project* noise includes a combination of highway and transit sources. Examples are: new highway construction providing general-purpose lanes as well as dedicated bus/HOV lanes and lane additions or reconfigurations on existing highways or arterials to accommodate buses/HOVs. These multi-modal projects fall into two sub-categories and the appropriate method to use for noise prediction and impact assessment depends on whether the highway noise dominates throughout day and night or the transit noise dominates during off-peak and late night hours.

If sufficient evidence shows that highway noise dominates, the methods of FHWA, including the latest authorized version of the Traffic Noise Model (TNM), should be used. Otherwise both FHWA and FTA prediction and impact assessment procedures should be used to determine whether neither, one or each mode causes impact and where mitigation is best applied.

Factors to consider when deciding which sub-category is appropriate for a given project are as follows:

- **Volume of traffic:** Major freeways and interstate highways often carry significant volumes of traffic throughout the day and night, such that the highway noise dominates at all times. Transit noise in this case may be insignificant in comparison, and the FHWA prediction method and noise abatement criteria would be used.
- **Traffic patterns:** Some highways and arterials serve primarily as commuter routes such that nighttime traffic diminishes considerably, while transit systems continue to operate well into the late hours. Here the dominant noise source at times of maximum sensitivity may be transit. Consequently, both FHWA and FTA prediction methods would be used.
- **Type of traffic:** Some highways and arterials may serve commuters during the daytime hours, but provide access to business centers by trucks at night. In this case, the roadway noise would likely continue to dominate and the FHWA methods would be appropriate.
- **Alignment configuration:** Elevation of the transit mode in the median or beside a busy highway may result in transit noise contributing more noise to nearby neighborhoods than a highway that may be partially shielded by rows of buildings adjacent to the right-of-way. In this case, both the FHWA and FTA methods should be used.

The noise impact criteria for rail and bus facilities are presented in Section 3.1. These criteria were developed specifically for transit noise sources operating on fixed guideways or at fixed facilities in urban areas. The criterion for the onset of Moderate Impact varies according to the existing noise level and the predicted project noise level, and is determined by the threshold at which the percentage of people highly annoyed by the project noise starts to become measurable. The corresponding criterion for Severe Impact similarly varies according to the existing noise level as well as the project noise level, but is determined by a higher, more significant percentage of people highly annoyed by project noise. Guidelines for the application of the criteria are included in Section 3.2, and background materials on the development of the criteria are included in Appendix B.

3.1 NOISE IMPACT CRITERIA FOR TRANSIT PROJECTS

The noise impact criteria for mass transit projects involving rail or bus facilities are shown graphically in Figure 3-1 and are tabulated in Table 3-1. The equations used to define these criteria are included in Appendix B. The criteria apply to all rail projects (e.g., rail rapid transit, light rail transit, commuter rail, and automated guideway transit) as well as fixed facilities such as storage and maintenance yards, passenger stations and terminals, parking facilities, and substations. They may also be used for bus projects operating

on local streets and separate roadways built exclusively for buses. In contrast, for busways and HOV lanes which are to be integrated in existing highways (e.g., the addition of new lanes or the redesignation of existing lanes on a highway), FHWA's noise abatement criteria are the appropriate noise criteria to use. Likewise, if the project is a new highway involving both general-purpose and dedicated bus/HOV lanes, the FHWA approach is followed. The FHWA criteria are briefly summarized in Section 3.3.

3.1.1 Basis of Noise Impact Criteria

The noise impact criteria in Figure 3-1 and Table 3-1 are based on comparison of the existing outdoor noise levels and the future outdoor noise levels from the proposed project. They incorporate both absolute criteria, which consider activity interference caused by the transit project alone, and relative criteria, which consider annoyance due to the change in the noise environment caused by the transit project.

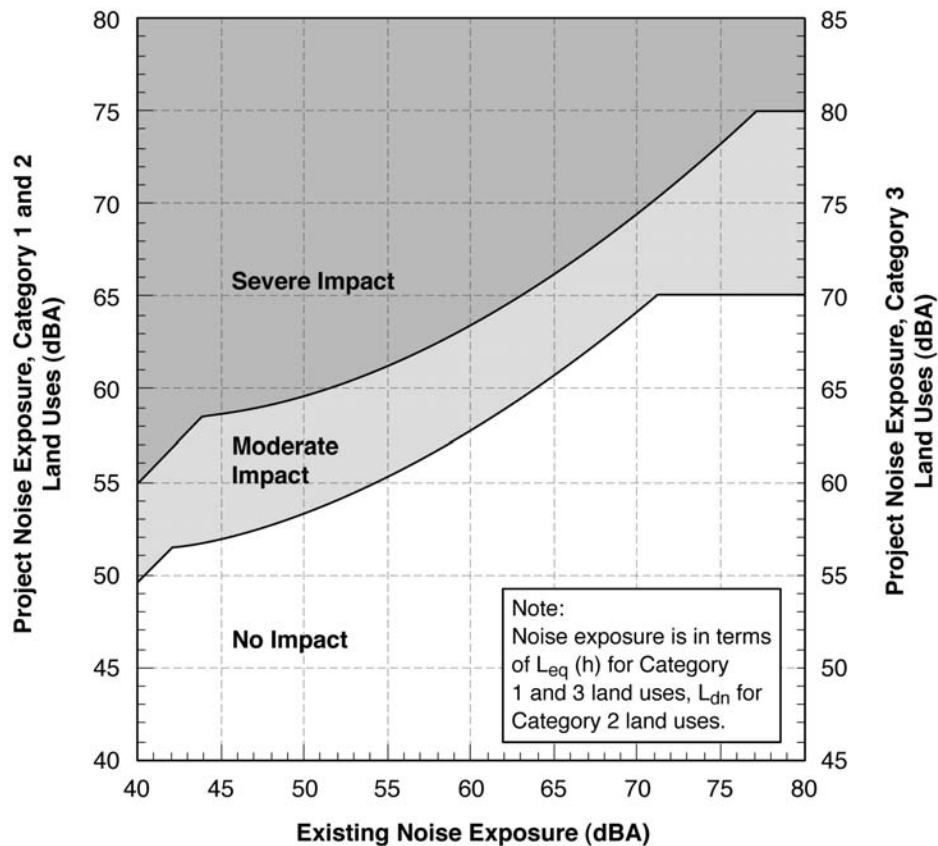


Figure 3-1. Noise Impact Criteria for Transit Projects

The noise criteria and descriptors depend on land use, as defined in Table 3-2. Further guidance on the definition of land use, the selection of the appropriate noise metric and the application of the criteria is given in Section 3.2 of this chapter, with more detailed guidelines given in Chapters 5 and 6.

Table 3-1. Noise Levels Defining Impact for Transit Projects						
Existing Noise Exposure* L _{eq} (h) or L _{dn} (dBA)	Project Noise Impact Exposure,* L _{eq} (h) or L _{dn} (dBA)					
	Category 1 or 2 Sites			Category 3 Sites		
	No Impact	Moderate Impact	Severe Impact	No Impact	Moderate Impact	Severe Impact
<43	< Ambient+10	Ambient + 10 to 15	>Ambient+15	<Ambient+15	Ambient + 15 to 20	>Ambient+20
43	<52	52-58	>58	<57	57-63	>63
44	<52	52-58	>58	<57	57-63	>63
45	<52	52-58	>58	<57	57-63	>63
46	<53	53-59	>59	<58	58-64	>64
47	<53	53-59	>59	<58	58-64	>64
48	<53	53-59	>59	<58	58-64	>64
49	<54	54-59	>59	<59	59-64	>64
50	<54	54-59	>59	<59	59-64	>64
51	<54	54-60	>60	<59	59-65	>65
52	<55	55-60	>60	<60	60-65	>65
53	<55	55-60	>60	<60	60-65	>65
54	<55	55-61	>61	<60	60-66	>66
55	<56	56-61	>61	<61	61-66	>66
56	<56	56-62	>62	<61	61-67	>67
57	<57	57-62	>62	<62	62-67	>67
58	<57	57-62	>62	<62	62-67	>67
59	<58	58-63	>63	<63	63-68	>68
60	<58	58-63	>63	<63	63-68	>68
61	<59	59-64	>64	<64	64-69	>69
62	<59	59-64	>64	<64	64-69	>69
63	<60	60-65	>65	<65	65-70	>70
64	<61	61-65	>65	<66	66-70	>70
65	<61	61-66	>66	<66	66-71	>71
66	<62	62-67	>67	<67	67-72	>72
67	<63	63-67	>67	<68	68-72	>72
68	<63	63-68	>68	<68	68-73	>73
69	<64	64-69	>69	<69	69-74	>74
70	<65	65-69	>69	<70	70-74	>74
71	<66	66-70	>70	<71	71-75	>75
72	<66	66-71	>71	<71	71-76	>76
73	<66	66-71	>71	<71	71-76	>76
74	<66	66-72	>72	<71	71-77	>77
75	<66	66-73	>73	<71	71-78	>78
76	<66	66-74	>74	<71	71-79	>79
77	<66	66-74	>74	<71	71-79	>79
>77	<66	66-75	>75	<71	71-80	>80

* L_{dn} is used for land use where nighttime sensitivity is a factor; L_{eq} during the hour of maximum transit noise exposure is used for land use involving only daytime activities.

Table 3-2. Land Use Categories and Metrics for Transit Noise Impact Criteria		
Land Use Category	Noise Metric (dBA)	Description of Land Use Category
1	Outdoor $L_{eq}(h)^*$	Tracts of land where quiet is an essential element in their intended purpose. This category includes lands set aside for serenity and quiet, and such land uses as outdoor amphitheaters and concert pavilions, as well as National Historic Landmarks with significant outdoor use. Also included are recording studios and concert halls.
2	Outdoor L_{dn}	Residences and buildings where people normally sleep. This category includes homes, hospitals and hotels where a nighttime sensitivity to noise is assumed to be of utmost importance.
3	Outdoor $L_{eq}(h)^*$	Institutional land uses with primarily daytime and evening use. This category includes schools, libraries, theaters, and churches where it is important to avoid interference with such activities as speech, meditation and concentration on reading material. Places for meditation or study associated with cemeteries, monuments, museums, campgrounds and recreational facilities can also be considered to be in this category. Certain historical sites and parks are also included.
* L_{eq} for the noisiest hour of transit-related activity during hours of noise sensitivity.		

3.1.2 Defining the Levels of Impact

The noise impact criteria are defined by two curves which allow increasing project noise levels as existing noise increases up to a point, beyond which impact is determined based on project noise alone. Below the lower curve in Figure 3-1, a proposed project is considered to have no noise impact since, on the average, the introduction of the project will result in an insignificant increase in the number of people highly annoyed by the new noise. The curve defining the onset of noise impact stops increasing at 65 dB for Category 1 and 2 land use, a standard limit for an acceptable living environment defined by a number of Federal agencies. Project noise above the upper curve is considered to cause Severe Impact since a significant percentage of people would be highly annoyed by the new noise. This curve flattens out at 75 dB for Category 1 and 2 land use, a level associated with an unacceptable living environment. As indicated by the right-hand scale on Figure 3-1, the project noise criteria are 5 decibels higher for Category 3 land uses since these types of land use are considered to be slightly less sensitive to noise than the types of land use in categories 1 and 2.

Between the two curves the proposed project is judged to have Moderate Impact. The change in the cumulative noise level is noticeable to most people, but may not be sufficient to cause strong, adverse reactions from the community. In this transitional area, other project-specific factors must be considered to determine the magnitude of the impact and the need for mitigation, such as the existing level, predicted level of increase over existing noise levels and the types and numbers of noise-sensitive land uses affected.

Although the curves in Figure 3-1 are defined in terms of the project noise exposure and the existing noise exposure, it is important to emphasize that it is the increase in the cumulative noise – when project is added to existing – that is the basis for the criteria. The complex shapes of the curves are based on the considerations

of cumulative noise increase described in Appendix B. To illustrate this point, Figure 3-2 shows the noise impact criteria for Category 1 and 2 land use in terms of the allowable increase in the cumulative noise exposure. The horizontal axis is the existing noise exposure and the vertical axis is the increase in cumulative noise level due to the transit project. The measure of noise exposure is L_{dn} for residential areas and L_{eq} for land uses that do not have nighttime noise sensitivity. Since L_{dn} and L_{eq} are measures of total acoustic energy, any new noise source in a community will cause an increase, even if the new source level is less than the existing level. Referring to Figure 3-2, it can be seen that the criterion for Moderate Impact allows a noise exposure increase of 10 dBA if the existing noise exposure is 42 dBA or less but only a 1 dBA increase when the existing noise exposure is 70 dBA

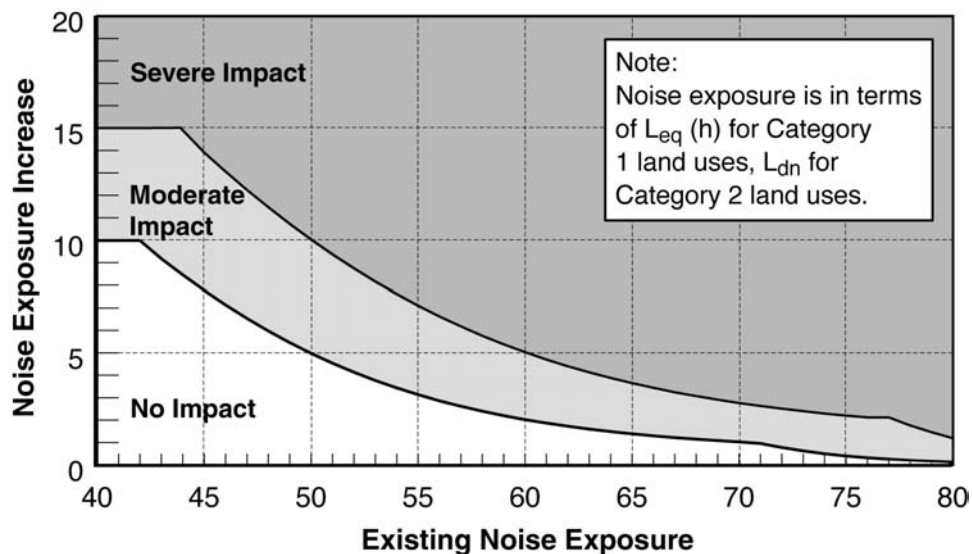


Figure 3-2. Increase in Cumulative Noise Levels Allowed by Criteria (Land Use Cat. 1 & 2)

As the existing level of ambient noise increases, the allowable level of transit noise increases, but the total amount that community noise exposure is allowed to increase is reduced. This accounts for the unexpected result that a project noise exposure which is less than the existing noise exposure can still cause impact. This is clearer from the examples given in Table 3-3 which indicate the level of transit noise allowed for different existing levels of exposure.

Table 3-3. Noise Impact Criteria: Effect on Cumulative Noise Exposure			
L_{dn} or L_{eq} in dBA (rounded to nearest whole decibel)			
Existing Noise Exposure	Allowable Project Noise Exposure	Allowable Combined Total Noise Exposure	Allowable Noise Exposure Increase
45	51	52	7
50	53	55	5
55	55	58	3
60	57	62	2
65	60	66	1
70	64	71	1
75	65	75	0

Any increase greater than shown above in Table 3-3 will cause Moderate Impact. This table shows that as the existing noise exposure increases from 45 dBA to 75 dBA, the allowed transit noise exposure increases from 51 dBA to 65 dBA. However, the allowed increase in the cumulative noise level decreases from 7 dBA to 0 dBA (rounded to the nearest whole decibel). The justification for this is that people already exposed to high levels of noise should be expected to tolerate only a small increase in the amount of noise in their community.

In contrast, if the existing noise levels are quite low, it is reasonable to allow a greater change in the community noise for the equivalent difference in annoyance. It should be noted that these criteria are based on general community reactions to noise at varying levels which have been documented in scientific literature and do not account for specific community attitudinal factors which may exist.

3.2 APPLICATION OF NOISE IMPACT CRITERIA

3.2.1 Noise-Sensitive Land Uses

As indicated in Section 3.1.1, the noise impact criteria and descriptors depend on land use, designated either Category 1, Category 2 or Category 3. Category 1 includes uses where quiet is an essential element in their intended purpose, such as indoor concert halls or outdoor concert pavilions or National Historic Landmarks where outdoor interpretation routinely takes place. Category 2 includes residences and buildings where people sleep, while Category 3 includes institutional land uses with primarily daytime and evening use such as schools, places of worship and libraries.

The criteria do not apply to most commercial or industrial uses because, in general, the activities within these buildings are compatible with higher noise levels. They do apply to business uses which depend on quiet as an important part of operations, such as sound and motion picture recording studios.

Historically significant sites are treated as noise-sensitive depending on the land use activities. Sites of national significance with considerable outdoor use required for site interpretation would be in Category 1. Historical sites that are currently used as residences will be in Category 2. Historic buildings with indoor use of an interpretive nature involving meditation and study fall into Category 3. These include museums, significant birthplaces and buildings in which significant historical events occurred.

Most busy downtown areas have buildings which are historically significant because they represent a particular architectural style or are prime examples of the work of an historically significant designer. If the buildings or structures are used for commercial or industrial purposes and are located in busy commercial areas, they are not considered noise-sensitive and the noise impact criteria do not apply. Similarly, historical transportation structures, such as terminals and railroad stations, are not considered noise-sensitive land uses themselves. These buildings or structures are, of course, afforded special protection under Section 4(f) of the DOT Act and Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act. However, based strictly on how they are used and the settings in which they are located, these types of historical buildings are not considered noise-sensitive sites.

Parks are a special case. Whether a park is noise-sensitive depends on how it is used. Most parks used primarily for active recreation would not be considered noise-sensitive. However, some parks---even some in dense urban areas---are used for passive recreation like reading, conversation, meditation, etc. These places are valued as havens from the noise and rapid pace of everyday city life and they should be treated as noise-sensitive. The noise sensitivity of parks should be determined on a case-by-case basis after carefully considering how each facility is used. The state or local agency with jurisdiction over the park should be consulted on questions about how the park is used and how much use it gets.

3.2.2 Noise Metrics

The basis for the development of the noise impact criteria (see Appendix B) has been the relationship between the percentage of highly annoyed people and the noise levels of their residential environment. Consequently, the criteria are centered around residential land use with the use of L_{dn} as the noise descriptor sensitive to noise intrusion at night. The noise criteria use L_{dn} for other land uses where nighttime sensitivity is a factor. The criteria are also to be applied to non-residential land uses that are sensitive to noise during daytime hours.

Because the L_{dn} and the maximum daytime hourly L_{eq} have similar values for a typical noise environment, the daytime or early evening L_{eq} can be used for evaluating noise impact at locations where nighttime sensitivity is not a factor. For land use involving only daytime activities (e.g. churches, schools, libraries, parks) the impact is evaluated in terms of $L_{eq}(h)$, defined as the L_{eq} for the noisiest hour of transit-related activity during which human activities occur at the noise-sensitive location.

However, due to the types of land use included in Category 3, the criteria allow the project noise for Category 3 sites to be 5 decibels greater than for Category 1 and Category 2 sites. With the exception of recreational facilities, which are clearly less sensitive to noise than Category 1 and 2 sites, Category 3 sites include primarily indoor activities and thus the criteria account for the noise reduction provided by the building structure.

Although the maximum noise level ($L_{\max}$) is not used in this manual as the basis for the noise impact criteria for transit projects, it is a useful metric for providing a fuller understanding of the noise impact from some transit operations. Specifically, rail transit characteristically produces high intermittent noise levels which may be objectionable depending on the distance from the alignment. Thus, it is recommended that $L_{\max}$ information be provided in environmental documents to supplement the noise impact assessment and to help satisfy the "full disclosure" requirements of NEPA. Procedures for computing the $L_{\max}$ for a single train passby are provided in Appendix F.

3.2.3 Considerations in Applying the Noise Impact Criteria

The procedure for assessing impact is to determine the existing noise exposure and the predicted project noise exposure at a given site, in terms of either L_{dn} or $L_{eq}(h)$ as appropriate, and to plot these levels on Figure 3-1. The location of the plotted point in the three impact ranges is an indication of the magnitude of the impact. For simplicity, noise impact can also be determined by using Table 3-1, rounding all noise level values to the nearest whole decibel before using the table. This level of precision is sufficient for determining the degree of noise impact at specific locations and should be adequate for most applications. However, a more precise determination of noise impact may be appropriate in some situations, such as when estimating the distance from the project to which noise impact extends. In such cases, more precise noise limits can be determined using the criteria equations provided in Appendix B.

In certain cases, the cumulative form of the noise criteria shown in Figure 3-2 must be used. These cases involve projects where changes are proposed to an existing transit system, as opposed to a new project in an area previously without transit. Such changes might include operations of a new type of vehicle, modifications of track alignments within existing transit corridors, or changes in facilities that dominate existing noise levels. In these cases, the existing noise sources change as a result of the project, and so it is not possible to define project noise separately from existing noise. An example would be a commuter rail corridor where the existing noise along the alignment is dominated by diesel locomotive-hauled trains, and where the project involves electrification with the resulting replacement of some of the diesel-powered locomotives with electric trains operating at increased frequency of service and higher speeds on the same tracks. In this case, the existing noise can be determined and a new future noise can be calculated, but it is not possible to describe what constitutes the "project noise." For example, if the existing noise dominated by trains was measured to be an L_{dn} of 63 dBA at a particular location, and the new combination of diesel and electric trains is projected to be an L_{dn} of 65 dBA, the change in the noise exposure due to the project would be 2 dB. Referring to Figure 3-2, a 2 dB increase with an existing noise exposure of 63 dBA would be rated as a Moderate Impact. Normally the project noise is added to the existing noise to come up with a new cumulative noise, but in this case, the existing noise was dominated by a source that changed due to the project so it would be incorrect to add the project noise to the existing noise. Consequently, the existing noise determined by measurement is compared with a new calculated future noise, but a description of what constitutes the actual project is complex.

Another example would be a rail corridor where a track is added and grade crossings are closed, potentially

resulting in a change in train location and horn operation. Here the “project noise” results from moving some trains closer to some receivers, away from others, and elimination of horns. In this case, the change in noise level is more readily determined than the noise from the actual project elements. In all cases, Figure 3-2 for changes in a transit system results in the same assessment of impact as Figure 3-1 for development of transit facilities in a new area.

For residential land use, the noise criteria are to be applied outside the *building locations* at noise-sensitive areas with frequent human use including outdoor patios, decks, pools, and play areas. If none, the criteria should be applied near building doors and windows. For parks and other significant outdoor use, apply criteria at the *property line*. However, for locations where land use activity is solely indoors, noise impact may be less significant if the outdoor-to-indoor reduction is greater than for typical buildings (about 25 dB with windows closed). Thus, if the project sponsor can demonstrate indoor activity only, mitigation may not be needed.

It is important to note that the criteria specify a comparison of future project noise with existing noise and *not* with projections of future “no-build” noise exposure (i.e. without the project). Furthermore, it should be emphasized that it is not necessary nor recommended that existing noise exposure be determined by measuring at every noise-sensitive location in the project area. Rather, the recommended approach is to characterize the noise environment for “clusters” of sites based on measurements or estimates at representative locations in the community. In view of the sensitivity of the noise criteria to the existing noise exposure, careful characterization of pre-project ambient noise is important. Guidelines for selecting representative receiver locations and determining ambient noise are provided in Appendix C and Appendix D, respectively.

3.2.4 Mitigation Policy Considerations

The following statutes and implementing regulations concerning environmental protection guide the Federal Transit Administration’s decisions on the need for noise mitigation. While the environmental impact statement requirement in the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) is widely known, the statute also establishes a broad mandate for Federal agencies to incorporate environmental protection and enhancement measures into the programs and projects they help finance.⁽¹⁾ In conjunction with FHWA, FTA has issued a regulation implementing NEPA which sets out the agencies’ general policy on environmental mitigation. It states that measures necessary to mitigate adverse impacts are to be incorporated into the project and, further, that such measures are eligible for Federal funding when FTA determines that “. . . the proposed mitigation represents a reasonable public expenditure after considering the impacts of the action and the benefits of the proposed mitigation measures.”⁽²⁾

While NEPA establishes broad policy, a more explicit statutory mandate for mitigating adverse noise impacts is set forth in the Federal Transit Laws.⁽³⁾ Before approving a construction grant, FTA must make a finding that “. . . (ii) the preservation and enhancement of the environment, and the interest of the community in which a project is located, were considered; and (iii) no adverse environmental effect is likely to result from the project, or no feasible and prudent alternative to the effect exists and all reasonable steps have been taken to minimize the effect.” (49 U.S.C. 5324(b)(3)(A)).

3.2.5 Determining the Need for Noise Mitigation

Because intrusive noise is frequently among the most significant environmental concerns of planned mass transit projects, FTA, working with the project sponsor, makes every reasonable effort to reduce predicted noise to levels deemed acceptable for affected noise-sensitive land uses. The noise impact criteria in Chapter 3 provide the framework for identifying the magnitude of the impact. Then, the need for noise mitigation is determined based on the magnitude and consideration of factors specifically related to the proposed project and affected land uses.

Project-generated noise in the “No Impact” range is not likely to be found annoying. Noise projections in this range are considered acceptable by FTA and mitigation is not required. At the other extreme, noise projections in the “Severe” range represent the most compelling need for mitigation. However, before mitigation measures are considered, the project sponsor should first evaluate alternative locations/alignments to determine whether it is feasible to avoid Severe impacts altogether. In densely populated urban areas, this evaluation of alternative locations may reveal a trade-off of one group of impacted noise-sensitive sites for another – especially for surface rail alignments passing through built-up areas. However, this is not always the case; projects which are characterized more as point sources of noise than line sources often present a greater opportunity for selecting alternative sites. Note that this guidance manual and FTA's environmental impact regulation both attempt to encourage project sites which are compatible with surrounding development. The regulation designates certain projects as categorical exclusions when located in areas with compatible land use (e.g., bus terminals and maintenance facilities located in areas with mostly commercial or industrial use). In this manual, the list of noise-sensitive land uses in Chapter 3 does not include most commercial and industrial land uses, thus obviating the need to consider noise mitigation in areas with predominantly commercial or industrial use.

If it is not practical to avoid Severe impacts by changing the location of the project, mitigation measures must be considered. Impacts in this range have the greatest adverse impact on the community; thus there is a presumption by FTA that mitigation will be incorporated in the project unless there are truly extenuating circumstances which prevent it. The goal is to gain substantial noise reduction through the use of mitigation measures, not simply to reduce the predicted levels to just below the Severe Impact threshold. Since FTA has to determine whether the mitigation is feasible and prudent, the evaluation of specific measures should include the noise reduction potential, the cost, the effect on transit operations and maintenance, and any other relevant factors, for example, any new environmental impacts which may be caused by the measure. A thorough evaluation enables FTA to make the findings required by section 5324(b) of the Federal Transit Laws and possibly other statutes, such as Section 4(f) of the DOT Act or Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act.

Projected noise levels in the Moderate Impact range will also require consideration and adoption of mitigation measures when it is considered reasonable. The range of Moderate Impact delineates an area where project planners are alerted to the potential for adverse impacts and complaints from the community and must then carefully consider project specifics as well as details concerning the affected properties in determining the need for mitigation. While impacts in this range are not of the same magnitude as Severe impacts, there can be circumstances regarding the factors outlined below which make a compelling argument for mitigation.

The following considerations will help project planners and FTA staff in reaching these determinations:

- The number of noise-sensitive sites affected at this level. A row or cluster of residences adjacent to a rail transit line establishes a greater need for mitigation than one or several isolated residences in a mixed-use area.
- The increase over existing noise levels. Since the noise impact criteria are delineated as bands or ranges, project noise can vary 5-7 decibels within the band of Moderate Impact at any specific ambient noise level. If the project and ambient noise plot falls just below the Severe range (in Figure 3-1), the need for mitigation is strongest. Similarly, if the plot falls just above the No Impact threshold, there is less need.
- The noise sensitivity of the property. Table 3-2 gives a comprehensive list of noise-sensitive land uses; yet there can be differences in noise sensitivity depending on individual circumstances. For example, parks and recreational areas vary in their sensitivity depending on the type of use they experience (active vs. passive recreation) and the settings in which they are located.
- Effectiveness of the mitigation measure(s). What is the magnitude of the noise reduction that can be achieved? Are there conditions which limit effectiveness, for example, noise barrier effectiveness for a multi-story apartment building?
- Neighborhoods with ambient noise levels already heavily influenced by transportation noise, especially the same type of noise source as the project. Ambient levels above 65 dB (Ldn) are considered “normally unsatisfactory” for residential land use by the Department of Housing and Urban Development. Thus there is a stronger need for mitigation if a project is proposed in an area currently experiencing high noise levels from surface transportation. An example would be a project where additional commuter tracks are added to a very busy rail corridor. If this project were placed in a less noisy environment, the impact assessment might show a Severe Impact, but when the project is overlaid on an existing noisy environment, the result could be Moderate Impact or, possibly, No Impact. However, in this situation the new cumulative noise environment may be very objectionable because people will not be compartmentalizing the existing noise versus the new noise and reacting only to the new noise. In this circumstance impacts predicted in the Moderate range should be treated as if they were Severe.
- Community views. This manual provides the methodology to make an objective assessment of the need for noise mitigation. However, the views of the community cannot be overlooked. The NEPA compliance process provides the framework for hearing the community's concerns about a proposed project and then making a good-faith effort to address those concerns. Many projects can be expected to have projected noise levels within the Moderate Impact range and decisions regarding mitigation should be made only after considering input from the affected public, relevant government agencies and community organizations. There have been cases where the solution to the noise problem – a sound barrier – was rejected by community members because of perceived adverse visual effects.
- Special protection provided by law. Section 4(f) of the DOT Act and Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act come into play frequently during the environmental review of transit projects. Section 4(f) protects historic sites and publicly-owned parks, recreation areas and wildlife refuges. Section 106

protects historic and archeological resources. In general, noise in the Moderate Impact range would not substantially impair the use of a property afforded protection under Section 4(f). Thus it would not constitute a “constructive use” as this term is defined in Section 4(f) regulations. In the Section 106 process protecting historic and cultural properties, Moderate Impact may or may not be considered an “adverse effect” depending on the individual circumstances. Historic properties are only noise-sensitive based on how they are used. As previously noted, some historic properties are not noise-sensitive at all. It is possible, though, that a historic building housing sensitive uses like a library or museum could be adversely affected by noise in the Moderate range. The regulatory processes stemming from these statutes require coordination and consultation with agencies and organizations having jurisdiction over these resources. Their views on the project's impact on protected resources are given careful consideration by FTA and the project sponsor, and their recommendations may influence the decision to adopt noise reduction measures.

Cost is an important consideration in reaching decisions about noise mitigation measures. One guideline for gauging the reasonableness of the cost of mitigation is the state DOT's procedures on the subject. Each state has established its own cost threshold for determining whether installation of sound barriers for noise reduction is a reasonable expenditure. The states' cost thresholds range from \$15,000 to \$50,000 per benefited residence, with a cost-weighted average of \$24,000 per residence. Several airport authorities have placed limits on the costs they will incur for sound insulation per residence for homes that are impacted according to Federal Aviation Administration criteria. These costs range from \$20,000 to \$35,000 per residence (2002 dollars). As a starting point, FTA considers the midpoints of these ranges--\$25,000 to \$30,000 per benefited residence--to be reasonable from the standpoint of cost. It should be noted, though, that higher costs may be justified depending on the specific set of circumstances applying to a project.

The decision to include noise mitigation in a project is made by FTA after public review of the environmental document. This decision is reached in consultation with the project sponsor. If mitigation measures are deemed necessary to satisfy the statutory requirements, they will be incorporated as an integral part of the project, and subsequent grant documents will reference these measures as contractual obligations on the part of the project sponsor. FTA is required by law to ensure that the project sponsor complies with all design and mitigation commitments contained in the environmental document (23 U.S.C. 139 (c) (4)). There are some differences as to how noise mitigation and vibration mitigation are handled in EISs. The different approaches are discussed in Chapter 13.

3.3 NOISE IMPACT CRITERIA FOR HIGHWAY/TRANSIT PROJECTS

Under specific circumstances, noise impact from a mass transit project should be determined using FHWA's assessment procedures and noise abatement criteria, instead of the FTA procedures and guidelines. General guidance is given at the beginning of this chapter. FHWA methods are required for highway/transit projects (or portions of projects) that meet the following conditions:

- The project is jointly funded with FHWA and the state DOT is assisting with the impact assessment.

- The mass transit portions of the project are directly adjacent to (or within) FHWA-funded portions of the project.
- The project is located where highway noise predominates throughout the day and night.

In contrast, FTA methods should be used for other portions of the project that do not meet these requirements—for example, portions where the transit right-of-way diverges from the highway, or associated bus terminals and other transit facilities off the highway right-of-way.

In some cases, both FHWA and FTA methods should be used, such as when both highway and transit cause significant noise, but at different times of day. An example would be a transit alignment that shares the right-of-way with an arterial road with heavy traffic. Traffic noise may dominate during the peak commuting hours but not during off-peak periods when transit continues to operate. In this case, both sets of criteria would be used to determine whether impact occurs from neither, one or each mode.

In following the FHWA procedures, only loudest-hour noise levels are computed and assessed. These noise levels may be computed either with (1) the hourly calculation method in Chapter 6 of this manual or (2) the FHWA Traffic Noise Model (TNM). Often this choice of computation methods will depend upon the assistance provided by the FHWA-funded staff on the project. Even if methods in Chapter 6 are used for computation, however, the resulting noise levels must be assessed with FHWA methods under these circumstances.

FHWA criteria appear in the Code of Federal Regulations,^(4, 5) which is supplemented by a separate FHWA policy and guidance document.⁽⁶⁾ All three documents are available at: www.fhwa.dot.gov/environment/noise. The following sections summarize these FHWA criteria and their use.

3.3.1 FHWA Impact Criteria

FHWA requires assessment at affected existing activities, developed lands, and undeveloped lands for which development is planned, designed and programmed. At these locations, traffic noise is computed for the project's design year, which is often 20 years from the onset of environmental studies. This computation uses the traffic for the hour with the worst impact “on a regular basis.” In practice, traffic engineers often predict traffic volumes and speeds at several times during an average design-year day, and then noise computations decide the “worst” hour. Because assessment is for a single hour rather than for a 24-hour period, the noise metric is an hourly one, $L_{eq}(h)$.

FHWA requires two assessments of noise impact: one related to land-use type and the other to existing noise level.

First, noise impact occurs when predicted traffic noise levels “approach or exceed” the applicable Noise Abatement Criteria (NAC) in Table 3-4. FHWA allows individual state highway agencies to define “approach or exceed.” As a result, the actual impact criteria are all 1 to 3 decibels lower than the values in this table. Contact specific state highway agencies to learn their definition of “approach or exceed.” In addition, FHWA requires that primary consideration be given to exterior areas (Activity Categories A, B and C). The table's interior NAC (Category E) is used only where either (1) there are no affected exterior activities or (2) exterior activities are not impacted because they are far from or are physically shielded from the roadway.

Table 3-4. FHWA Noise Abatement Criteria			
Activity Category	Hourly A-weighted Sound Level (dBA)		Description of Activity Category
	L_{eq}(h)	L₁₀(h)	
A	57 Exterior	60 Exterior	Lands on which serenity and quiet are of extraordinary significance and serve an important public need and where the preservation of those qualities is essential if the area is to continue to serve its intended purpose.
B	67 Exterior	70 Exterior	Picnic areas, recreation areas, playgrounds, active sports areas, parks, residences, motels, hotels, schools, churches, libraries, and hospitals.
C	72 Exterior	75 Exterior	Developed lands, properties, or activities not included in Categories A or B above.
D	--	--	Undeveloped lands.
E	52 Interior	55 Interior	Residences, motels, hotels, public meeting rooms, schools, churches, libraries, hospitals, and auditoriums.
Note: Noise mitigation must be studied where predicted traffic noise levels approach or exceed the values in this table. Individual state highway agencies define “approach or exceed” within their states. As a result, the actual criteria that trigger mitigation studies are all 1 to 3 decibels lower than the values in this table. Contact specific state highway agencies to learn their definition of “approach or exceed.”			

Second, noise impact occurs when predicted traffic noise levels substantially exceed existing noise levels (future no-build noise levels are not used here). FHWA allows individual state highway agencies to define “substantially exceed.” Contact specific state highway agencies to learn their definition of “substantially exceed” (a criterion of 10 decibels above existing levels is the most common).

3.3.2 Use of Impact Criteria

When impact occurs by either method of assessment, NAC or substantial increase, FHWA requires study of the following noise abatement measures: traffic management, alteration of horizontal and vertical alignments, noise barriers whether within or outside the right-of-way, acquisition of buffer zones, noise insulation of public-use or nonprofit institutional structures. Measures that are both feasible and reasonable must be incorporated into the project.

Feasibility. Feasibility deals with engineering considerations. To be feasible, an abatement measure must first meet all safety, maintenance and other accepted design requirements. After safety/maintenance issues are resolved, FHWA considers a noise-abatement measure to be feasible if that measure can technically achieve a noise reduction of 5 decibels or more, given its physical aspects and those of its surroundings. Such acoustical feasibility is objective, not subjective. It is a matter of acoustical computation, depending upon such factors as topography, location of other nearby sound sources, and location of driveways, ramps, and cross streets.

Reasonableness. In the context of FHWA regulations, reasonableness is a more subjective matter. Reasonableness implies that common sense and good judgment were applied in arriving at a decision concerning the abatement measure. FHWA requires that: (1) the views of the impacted residents be a major consideration, and (2) the overall noise abatement benefits outweigh the overall adverse social, economic, and environmental effects, as well as the abatement cost.

Reasonableness also depends upon community wishes, aesthetics, community desires for their surrounding view, projected noise-level increase above existing levels, projected noise-level increase above future no-build levels, amount of development that occurred before and after the initial construction of the highway, type of protected development, effectiveness of land-use controls by the local jurisdiction, construction effects of the abatement measure on the natural environment, and the potential ability of the abatement measure to reduce noise during project construction, as well. Many state highway agencies restrict or expand this list of factors.

Reasonableness also depends upon cost effectiveness. FHWA requires state highway agencies to develop quantitative cost-effectiveness guidelines, which generally consider abatement cost and the number of people protected by the abatement measure—and sometimes also the amount of noise reduction provided by the abatement measure.

REFERENCES

1. United States Congress, National Environmental Policy Act of 1969; P.L. 91-190, January 1, 1970.
2. U.S. Department of Transportation, Federal Transit Administration and Federal Highway Administration, "Environmental Impact and Related Procedures." Final Rule, 52 Federal Register 32646-32669; August 28, 1987 (23 Code of Federal Regulations 771.105(d)).
3. The Federal Transit Laws, 49 U.S.C. 5301 et seq.
4. Federal Highway Administration. *23 CFR Part 772: Procedures for Abatement of Highway Traffic Noise and Construction Noise -- Final rule*. Federal Register, Vol. 62, No. 154, 11 August 1997.
5. Federal Highway Administration. *23 CFR Part 772: Procedures for Abatement of Highway Traffic Noise and Construction Noise*. Federal Register, Vol. 67, No. 58, 26 March 2002 (provides further background).
6. Federal Highway Administration. *Highway Traffic Noise Analysis and Abatement Policy and Guidance*. Office of Environment and Planning, Noise and Air Quality Branch, Washington DC, June 1995 (71 pages).

4. NOISE SCREENING PROCEDURE

The noise screening procedure is designed to identify locations where a project may cause noise impact. If no noise-sensitive land uses are present within a defined area of project noise influence, then no further noise assessment is necessary. This approach allows the focusing of further noise analysis on locations where impacts are likely. The screening procedure takes account of the noise impact criteria, the type of project and noise-sensitive land uses. For screening purposes, all noise-sensitive land uses are considered to be in a single category.

4.1 SCREENING DISTANCES

The distances given in Table 4-1 delineate a project's noise study area. The areas defined by the screening distances are meant to be sufficiently large to encompass all potentially impacted locations. They were determined using relatively high-capacity scenarios for a given project type. Data used in the calculations are listed in Table 4-2 as assumptions based on operations of a given project type and using the lowest threshold of impact, 50 dB, from the criteria curves in Figure 3-1. These distances can be scaled up or down for different sized projects by use of the methodology in Chapter 5, General Noise Assessment. FTA provides an Excel spreadsheet program to assist in these adjustments. The Federal Railroad Administration horn noise model is used to develop the screening distance at commuter rail grade crossings where horns and warning bells are used.⁽¹⁾

The noise screening procedure is applicable to all types of transit projects. The types of projects listed in Table 4-1 cover nearly all of the kinds of projects expected to undergo environmental assessment. Clarification can be obtained from FTA on any special cases that are not represented in the table.

4.2 STEPS IN SCREENING PROCEDURE

The screening method works as follows:

- Determine the type of project and locate on Table 4-1.
- Review assumptions in Table 4-2. Make adjustments in screening distances to suit the project through the use of the methodology in Chapter 5, or the FTA spreadsheet model. The appropriate screening distance is where the project noise reaches 50 dBA for the descriptor shown.
- Determine the appropriate column under Screening Distance in Table 4-1. If buildings occur in the sound paths, then use the distances under Intervening Buildings. Otherwise use the distances under "Unobstructed".
- Note the distance in feet for that project in Table 4-1, or in the adjusted values obtained from Step 2. Apply this distance from the guideway centerline or nearest right-of-way line on both sides of a highway or access road. For small fixed facilities apply the distance from the center of the noise-generating activity. In the case of a fixed facility spread out over a large area, apply the distance from the outer boundary of the proposed project site.
- Within the distance noted above, locate any of the noise-sensitive land uses listed in Table 3-2.
- If it is determined that none of the listed land uses are within the distances noted in Table 4-1, then no further noise analysis is needed. On the other hand, if one or more of the noise-sensitive land uses are within the screening distances noted in Table 4-1, as adjusted, then further analysis is needed and the procedure described in Chapter 5 is followed.

Table 4-1. Screening Distances for Noise Assessments			
Type of Project		Screening Distance* (ft)	
		Unobstructed	Intervening Buildings
Fixed Guideway Systems:			
Commuter Rail Mainline		750	375
Commuter Rail Station	With Horn Blowing	1,600	1,200
	Without Horn Blowing	250	200
Commuter Rail-Highway Crossing with Horns and Bells		1,600	1,200
Rail Rapid Transit		700	350
Rail Rapid Transit Station		200	100
Light Rail Transit		350	175
Access Roads		100	50
Low- and Intermediate-Capacity Transit	Steel Wheel	125	50
	Rubber Tire	90	40
	Monorail	175	70
Yards and Shops		1000	650
Parking Facilities		125	75
Access Roads		100	50
Ancillary Facilities			
Ventilation Shafts		200	100
Power Substations		250	125
Bus Systems:			
Busway		500	250
BRT on exclusive roadway		200	100
Bus Facilities	Access Roads	100	50
	Transit Mall	225	150
	Transit Center	225	150
	Storage & Maintenance	350	225
	Park & Ride Lots w/Buses	225	150
Ferry Boat Terminals:		300	150
*Measured from centerline of guideway/roadway for mobile sources; from center of noise-generating activity for stationary sources.			

Table 4-2. Assumptions for Screening Distances for Noise Assessments				
Type of Project		Operations	Speeds	Descriptor
Fixed Guideway Systems:				
Commuter Rail Mainline		66 day /12 night; 1 loco, 6 cars	55 mph	Ldn
Commuter Rail Station	With Horn Blowing	22 day / 4 night	N/A	Ldn
	W/O Horn Blowing	22 day / 4 night	N/A	Ldn
Commuter Rail-Highway Crossing with Horns and Bells		22 day / 4 night	55 mph	Ldn
Rail Rapid Transit		220 day / 24 night; 6-car trains	50 mph	Ldn
Rail Rapid Transit Station		220 day / 24 night	20 mph	Ldn
Light Rail Transit		150 day / 18 night; 2 artic veh.	35 mph	Ldn
Access Roads to Stations		1000 cars, 12 buses	35 mph	PH Leq*
Low- and Intermediate-Capacity Transit	Steel Wheel	220 day / 24 night	30 mph	Ldn
	Rubber Tire	220 day / 24 night	30 mph	Ldn
	Monorail	220 day / 24 night	30 mph	Ldn
Yards and Shops		20 train movements	N/A	PH Leq
Parking Facilities		1000 cars	N/A	PH Leq
Access Roads to Parking		1000 cars	35 mph	PH Leq
Ancillary Facilities				
Ventilation Shafts		Rapid Transit in Subway	50 mph	Ldn
Power Substations		Sealed shed, air conditioned	N / A	Ldn
Bus Systems:				
Busway		30 buses, 120 automobiles	50 mph	PH Leq
BRT on exclusive roadway		30 buses	35 mph	PH Leq
Bus Facilities	Access Roads	1000 cars	35 mph	PH Leq
	Transit Mall	20 buses	N/A	PH Leq
	Transit Center	20 buses	N/A	PH Leq
	Storage & Maintenance	30 buses	N/A	PH Leq
	Park & Ride Lots w/Buses	1000 cars, 12 buses	N/A	PH Leq
Ferry Boat Terminals:		8 boats with horns used in normal docking cycle	N/A	PH Leq

* PH Leq = hour of maximum transit activity

REFERENCES

1. U.S. Department of Transportation, Federal Railroad Administration. "Final Environmental Impact Statement: Interim Final Rule for the Use of Locomotive Horns at Highway-Rail Grade Crossings; Technical Supplement to DEIS and Chapter 3.4," Office of Railroad Development, Washington, D.C., December 5, 2003. Also see: <http://www.fra.dot.gov/downloads/RRDev/hornmodel.xls>.

5. GENERAL NOISE ASSESSMENT

This chapter contains procedures for the computation of both project and existing ambient noise levels for use in noise assessments required beyond the stage of the screening procedure of Chapter 4.

The **Screening Procedure** described in Chapter 4 is used to determine whether any noise-sensitive receivers are within a distance where impact is likely to occur. The distance given in the table defines the study area of any subsequent noise impact assessment. Where there is potential for noise impact, the procedures of Chapters 5 and 6 will be used to determine the extent and severity of impact. In some cases, a General Assessment may be all that is needed. On the other hand, if the proposed project is in close proximity to noise-sensitive land uses and it appears at the outset that the impact would be substantial, it is prudent to conduct a Detailed Analysis.

The **General Assessment** is used for a wide range of projects which show potential noise impact from the screening procedure. For a variety of smaller transit projects, a General Assessment may be all that is needed to evaluate noise impact and propose mitigation measures where necessary. It is also used to compare alternatives, such as locations of facilities or alignments, or even candidate transportation modes in a corridor. A General Assessment can provide the appropriate level of detail about noise impacts when an Alternatives Analysis/Draft EIS is being prepared to evaluate alternatives for a major capital investment. The procedure involves noise predictions commensurate with the level of design of the alternatives in the early stages of major investment planning. Estimates are made of project noise levels and of existing noise conditions to estimate the location of a noise impact contour which defines the outer limit of an impact corridor or area. An inventory of noise impacts within the area identifies locations where noise mitigation is likely and is used in comparing noise impact among alternatives. Noise mitigation policy considerations are discussed in Section 3.2.4 and the application of noise mitigation measures is described in Section 6.8.

Detailed Analysis is undertaken when the greatest accuracy is needed to assess impacts and the effectiveness of mitigation measures on a site-specific basis. In order to do this, the project must be defined to the extent that location, alignment, mode and operating characteristics are determined.

Detailed Analysis is often accomplished during the preliminary engineering phase. The results of the Detailed Analysis would be used in predicting the effectiveness of noise mitigation measures on particular noise-sensitive receivers. The procedures for performing a Detailed Analysis are described in Chapter 6.

This chapter describes the procedure for performing a General Noise Assessment. The General Assessment is based on noise source and land use information likely to be available at an early stage in the project development process. Sections of this chapter cover the key elements of the prediction procedure:

- Section 5.2 describes how to predict noise source levels with preliminary estimations of the effect of mitigation.
- Section 5.3 covers a simplified procedure for estimating noise propagation characteristics assuming flat terrain, with approximate shielding by rows of buildings or other barriers.
- Section 5.4 includes a simplified procedure for estimating existing noise.
- Section 5.5 shows how to estimate the noise impact contour that defines the approximate outer limit of noise impact.
- Section 5.6 describes how to conduct the noise impact inventory and how to present the information in an environmental document or a technical noise report.
- Four examples of General Assessments are given at the end of this chapter.

5.1 OVERVIEW

The steps in the General Noise Assessment are shown in Figure 5-1 and are described below. When several alternatives are evaluated in an environmental document, this approach can be applied to each alternative and the results compared.

Project Alternatives. Place the alternative under study into one of three categories: fixed-guideway transit, highway/transit, or stationary facility. Determine the Source Reference Level from the tables in Section 5.2. Each Source Reference Level pertains to a typical operation for one hour for a stationary source or one vehicle passby under reference operating conditions. Each utilizes the SEL noise descriptor, as discussed in Chapter 2.

Operational Characteristics. Convert the Source Reference Level to noise exposure in terms of $L_{eq}(h)$ or L_{dn} under approximate project operating conditions, using the appropriate equations depending upon the type of source. The noise exposure is determined at the reference distance of 50 feet.

Propagation Characteristics. Draw noise exposure-vs.-distance curve for this source, using the graphic in Section 5.3. This curve will show the source's noise exposure as a function of distance, ignoring

shielding. To account for shielding attenuation from rows of buildings, use a general rule for estimating the reduction in noise level and draw an adjusted exposure-vs-distance curve.

Study Area Characteristics. Estimate the existing noise exposure for areas surrounding the project from Table 5-7 in Section 5.4.

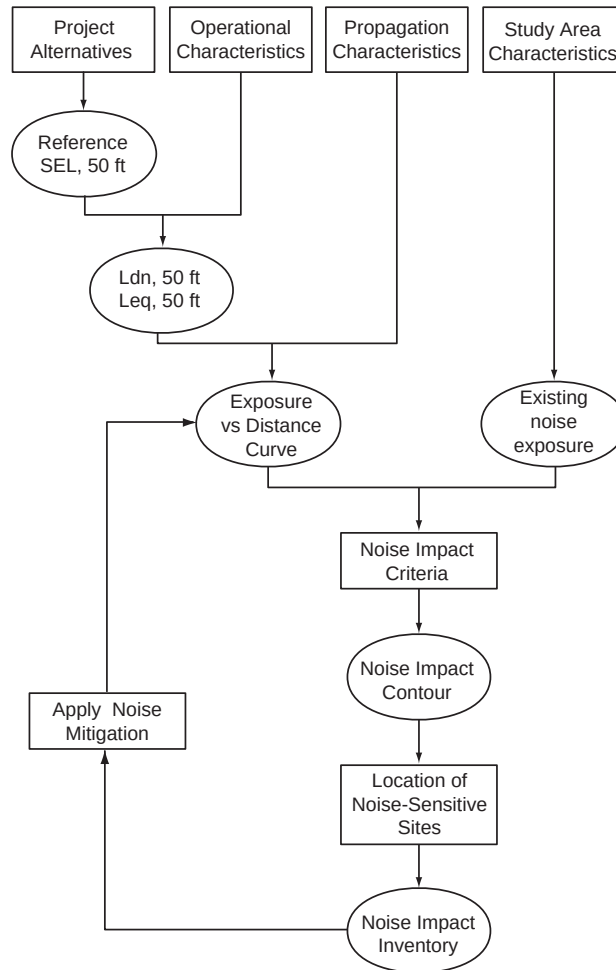


Figure 5-1. Procedure for General Noise Assessment

Noise Impact Contour Estimation. On a point-by-point basis, locate the project noise exposure and existing noise exposure combination that results in Moderate Impact according to the impact criteria from Chapter 3. Connect the points to obtain a contour line around the project which signifies the outer limits of Moderate Impact.

Alternatively, in the case where it is desired to make a comparison among different modal alternatives, specific decibel-level noise contours can be determined from the exposure-vs-distance curves (for example, 60dB, 65dB, 70dB contours).

Noise Impact Inventory. Tabulate noise-sensitive land uses within the specific contours using general assumptions for shielding attenuation from rows of buildings.

Noise Mitigation. Apply estimates of the noise reduction from mitigation in the community areas where potential impact has been identified and repeat the tabulation of noise impacts.

5.2 NOISE SOURCE LEVELS FOR GENERAL ASSESSMENT

The General Noise Assessment procedure begins by determining the project noise exposure at a reference distance for the various project alternatives. The reference noise exposure estimation procedures differ depending on the type of project (fixed-guideway, highway/transit, or stationary facility) as described in the following sections.

5.2.1 Fixed-Guideway Transit Sources

Fixed-guideway transit sources include commuter rail, rail rapid transit, light rail transit, automated guideway transit (AGT), monorail, and magnetically levitated vehicles (maglev). The noise characteristics of each depend on the system characteristics described in Chapter 2. For commuter railroads and light rail transit systems, the crossing of streets and highways at grade is likely, in which case the noise assessment of warning devices will have to be taken into account. At an early project stage, the information available includes:

- Candidate transit mode
- Guideway options
- Time of operation
- Operational headways
- Design speed
- Alternative alignments

This information is not sufficient to predict noise levels at all locations along the right-of-way, but by using conservative estimates (for example, maximum design speeds and operations at design capacities) it is sufficient to estimate worst-case noise impact contours.

Reference Levels in SEL. The procedure starts with predicting the source noise levels, expressed in terms of SEL at a reference distance and a reference speed. These are given in Table 5-1.

The reference SEL's are used in the equations of Table 5-2 to predict the noise exposure at 50 feet. Also shown in Table 5-2 are rough estimates of the noise reduction available from wayside noise barriers, the most common noise mitigation measure. See Chapter 6 for a complete description of the benefits resulting from noise mitigation. The approximate noise barrier lengths and locations developed in a General Assessment provide a preliminary basis for evaluating the costs and benefits of impact mitigation.

Table 5-1. Reference SEL's at 50 feet from Track and 50 mph

Source / Type		Reference Conditions	Reference SEL (SEL _{ref}), dBA
Commuter Rail, At-Grade	Locomotives	Diesel-electric, 3000 hp, throttle 5	92
		Electric	90
	Diesel Multiple Unit (DMU)	Diesel-powered, 1200 hp	85
	Horns	Within ¼ mile of grade crossing	110
	Cars	Ballast, welded rail	82
Rail Transit		At-grade, ballast, welded rail	82
Transit whistles / warning devices		Within 1/8 mile of grade crossing	93
AGT	Steel wheel	Aerial, concrete, welded rail	80
	Rubber Tire	Aerial, concrete guideway	78
Monorail		Aerial straddle beam	82
Maglev		Aerial, open guideway	72

Noise Exposure at 50 feet. After determining the reference levels for each of the noise sources, the next step is to determine the noise exposure at 50 feet expressed in terms of $L_{eq}(h)$ and L_{dn} . The additional data needed include:

- Number of train passbys during the day (defined as 7am to 10 pm) and night (defined as 10 pm to 7 am).
- Maximum number of train passbys during hours that Category 1 or Category 3 land uses are normally in use. This is usually the peak hour train volume.
- Number of vehicles per train (if this number varies during the day, take the average).
- Speed (maximum expected).
- Guideway configuration.
- Noise barrier location (if noise mitigation is determined necessary at the end of the first pass on the General Assessment).
- Location of highway and street grade crossings, if any.

These data are used in the equations in Table 5-2 to obtain adjustment factors to calculate L_{dn} and $L_{eq}(h)$ at 50 feet.

Table 5-2. Computation of Noise Exposure at 50 feet for Fixed-Guideway General Assessment	
LOCOMOTIVES[†] Hourly L_{eq} at 50 ft:	$L_{eqL}(h) = SEL_{ref} + 10 \log(N_{locos}) + K \log\left(\frac{S}{50}\right) + 10 \log(V) - 35.6$ Where K = -10 for passenger diesel; = 0 for DMU; = +10 for electric
LOCOMOTIVE WARNING HORNS^{††} Hourly L_{eq} at 50 ft:	$L_{eqH}(h) = SEL_{ref} + 10 \log(V) - 35.6$
RAIL VEHICLES^{††} Hourly L_{eq} at 50 ft:	$L_{eqC}(h) = SEL_{ref} + 10 \log(N_{cars}) + 20 \log\left(\frac{S}{50}\right) + 10 \log(V) - 35.6$ use the following adjustments as applicable: + 5 → JOINTED TRACK + 3 → EMBEDDED TRACK ON GRADE + 4 → AERIAL STRUCTURE WITH SLAB TRACK (except AGT & monorail) - 5 → if a NOISE BARRIER blocks the line of sight
TRANSIT WARNING HORNS^{†††} Hourly L_{eq} at 50 ft:	$L_{eqH}(h) = SEL_{ref} - 10 \log\left(\frac{S}{50}\right) + 10 \log(V) - 35.6$
COMBINED Hourly L_{eq} at 50 ft:	$L_{eq}(h) = 10 \log \left[10^{\left(\frac{L_{eqL}}{10}\right)} + 10^{\left(\frac{L_{eqC}}{10}\right)} \right]$
Daytime L_{eq} at 50 ft:	$L_{eq}(\text{day}) = L_{eq}(h) \mid v = v_d$
Nighttime L_{eq} at 50 ft:	$L_{eq}(\text{night}) = L_{eq}(h) \mid v = v_n$
L_{dn} at 50 ft:	$L_{dn} = 10 \log \left[(15) \times 10^{\left(\frac{L_{eq}(\text{day})}{10}\right)} + (9) \times 10^{\left(\frac{L_{eq}(\text{night})}{10}\right)} \right] - 13.8$
N_{locos} = average number of locomotives per train N_{cars} = average number of cars per train S = train speed, in miles per hour V = average hourly volume of train traffic, in trains per hour V_d = average hourly daytime volume of train traffic, in trains per hour = $\frac{\text{number of trains, 7am to 10pm}}{15}$ V_n = average hourly nighttime volumes of train traffic, in trains per hour = $\frac{\text{number of trains, 10pm to 7am}}{9}$	
[†] Assumes a passenger diesel locomotive power rating at approximately 3000 hp ^{††} Includes all commuter rail cars, transit cars, AGT and monorail ^{†††} Based on FRA's horn noise model (www.fra.dot.gov/downloads/RRDev/hornmodel.xls)	

5.2.2 Highway/Transit Sources

The highway/transit type sources include most transit modes that do not require a fixed-guideway. Examples are high-occupancy vehicles, such as buses, commuter vanpools and carpools. As noted in Chapter 3, some highway/transit projects are best analyzed with FHWA's noise prediction and impact assessment procedures. However, the procedures in this manual can be used for all types of projects involving highway vehicles. The noise characteristics of the vehicles depend on the system characteristics described in Chapter 2. Recent research has shown there is no statistically significant difference in the reference noise levels from various types of buses, so all buses are placed in a single category. At an early project development stage, the information available is as follows:

- Vehicle type
- Transitway design options
- Time of operation
- Typical headways
- Design speed
- Alternative alignments

This information is not sufficient to predict noise levels at all locations along the right-of-way, but is sufficient to estimate worst-case noise impact contours. The procedure is consistent with FHWA's highway noise prediction method (see Section 6.7.2 for an overview of the computation methods), with buses and vans corresponding to user-defined source emission levels and speed coefficients for buses and automobiles, respectively⁽¹⁾.

Reference Levels in SEL. Projections of noise from highway/transit sources begin by defining the source SEL at a reference distance of 50 feet and a reference speed. These are given in Table 5-3. The reference distance SEL's are used in the equations of Table 5-4 to predict the noise exposure at 50 feet. Also shown in Table 5-4 is a rough estimate of the minimum noise reduction available with wayside sound barriers. See Chapter 6 for descriptions of other mitigation measures and procedures for developing more accurate estimates of noise reduction from mitigation measures. The approximate noise barrier lengths and locations developed in a General Assessment allow preliminary estimates of the costs and benefits of impact mitigation.

Noise Exposure at 50 feet. After determining the reference levels for each of the noise sources, the next step is to determine the noise exposure at 50 feet. The additional data needed include:

- Number of vehicle passbys during the day (7am to 10 pm) and night (10 pm to 7 am).
- Number of vehicle passbys during hours that Category 1 or Category 3 land uses are normally in use.
- Speed (maximum expected).
- Transitway configuration (with or without noise barrier).

These data are used in the equations in Table 5-4 with the reference SEL's to calculate $L_{eq}(h)$ and L_{dn} at 50 feet.

Table 5-3. Source Reference Levels at 50 feet from Roadway, 50 mph	
Source[†]	Reference SEL (dBA)
Automobiles and Vans	74
Buses (diesel-powered)	82
Buses (electric)	80
Buses (hybrid)	83**
[†] Assumes normal roadway surface conditions	
** For hybrid buses, Reference SEL should be determined on a case-by-case basis.	

Table 5-4. Computation of L_{eq} and L_{dn} at 50 feet for Highway/Transit General Assessment	
Hourly L_{eq} at 50 ft:	$L_{eq}(h) = SEL_{ref} + 10 \log(V) + C_s \log\left(\frac{S}{50}\right) - 35.6$
Daytime L_{eq} at 50 ft:	$L_{eq}(day) = L_{eq}(h) _{v=v_d}$
Nighttime L_{eq} at 50 ft:	$L_{eq}(night) = L_{eq}(h) _{v=v_n}$
L_{dn} at 50 ft:	$L_{dn} = 10 \log \left[(15) \times 10^{\left(\frac{L_{eq}(day)}{10}\right)} + (9) \times 10^{\left(\frac{L_{eq}(night)+10}{10}\right)} \right] - 13.8$
Speed Constant:	$C_s = 15$ Diesel Buses $= 28$ Electric Buses $= 30,$ Automobile and van pools
Adjustment:	- 5 Noise Barrier
V	= hourly volume of vehicles of this type, in vehicles per hour.
V_d	= average hourly daytime volume of vehicles of this type, in vehicles per hour
	$= \frac{\text{total vehicle volume, 7am to 10pm}}{15}$
V_n	= average hourly nighttime volume of vehicles of this type, in vehicles per hour
	$= \frac{\text{total vehicle volume, 10pm to 7am}}{9}$
S	= average vehicle speed, in miles per hour

5.2.3 Stationary Sources

This section covers the general approach to assessment of noise from fixed transit system facilities. New transit facilities undergo a site review for best location which includes consideration of the noise sensitivity of surrounding land uses. Although many facilities, such as bus maintenance garages, are usually located in industrial and commercial areas, some facilities such as bus terminals, ferry terminals, train stations and park-and-ride lots may be placed near residential neighborhoods where noise impact may occur. Access roads to some of these facilities may also pass through noise-sensitive areas. In a General Assessment, only the salient features of each fixed facility are considered in the noise analysis.

Reference Levels in SEL. The source reference levels given in Table 5-5 are determined based on measurements for the peak hour of operation of a typical stationary source of the type and size noted. A large facility, such as a rail yard, is spread out over considerable area with various noise levels depending on the layout of the facility. Specifying the reference SEL at a distance of 50 feet from the property line would be misleading in this case. Consequently, the reference distance is described as "the equivalent distance of 50 feet," which is determined by estimating the noise levels at a greater distance and projecting back to 50 feet, assuming the noise sources are concentrated at the center of the site. If the location of noise sources is known, then the distance should be taken from the point of the noisiest activity on the site (e.g. the dock in the case of ferry boat operations). The reference SEL's are used in the equations of Table 5-6 to predict noise exposure at an equivalent distance of 50 feet from the center of the site. Noise from access roads is treated according to the procedures described in Section 5.2.2.

Table 5-6 also includes an estimate of the minimum noise reduction available with wayside noise barriers. Only approximate locations and lengths for barrier or other noise mitigation measures are developed during a General Assessment to provide a preliminary indication of the costs and benefits of mitigation.

Noise Exposure at Equivalent Distance of 50 feet. After determining the reference SEL's for each of the noise sources, the next step is to determine the noise exposure expressed in terms of L_{eq} and L_{dn} at an equivalent distance of 50 feet. The additional data needed include:

- Number of layover tracks and hours of use.
- Number of buses, if different from assumed reference conditions (if this number varies during the day, take the average).
- Number of ferry boat landings, if different from assumed reference conditions (if this number varies during the day, take the average).
- Actual capacity of parking garage or lot.

These data are used in the equations in Table 5-6 with the reference SEL's to calculate $L_{eq}(h)$ and L_{dn} at an equivalent distance of 50 feet.

Table 5-5. Source Reference Levels at 50 feet from Center of Site, Stationary Sources		
Source	Reference SEL (dBA)	Reference Conditions
Rail System:		
Yards and Shops	118	20 train movements in peak activity hour
Layover Tracks (commuter rail)	109	One train with diesel locomotive idling for one hour
Crossovers	100	One train
Crossing signals	109	3600 seconds duration
Bus System:		
Storage Yard	111	100 buses accessing facility in peak activity hour
Operating Facility	114	100 buses accessing facility, 30 buses serviced and cleaned in peak activity hour
Transit Center	101	20 buses in peak activity hour
Ferry Terminal:		
Ferry Boat (no fog horn sounded)	97	4 ferry boats landings in one hour
Ferry Boat (fog horn sounded)	100	
Parking Garage	92	1000 cars in peak activity hour
Park & Ride Lot	101	12 buses, 1000 cars in peak activity hour

Table 5-6. Computation of L_{eq} and L_{dn} at 50 feet for Stationary Source General Assessment		
Hourly L_{eq} at 50 ft:	$L_{eq}(h) = SEL_{ref} + C_N - 35.6$	
Daytime L_{eq} at 50 ft:	$L_{eq}(day) = 10 \log \left[\left(\frac{1}{15} \right) \sum_{7\text{ am}-10\text{ pm}} 10^{L_{eq}(h)/10} \right]$	
Nighttime L_{eq} at 50 ft:	$L_{eq}(night) = 10 \log \left[\left(\frac{1}{9} \right) \sum_{10\text{ pm}-7\text{ am}} 10^{L_{eq}(h)/10} \right]$	
L_{dn} at 50 ft:	$L_{dn} = 10 \log \left[(15) \times 10^{(L_{eq}(day)/10)} + (9) \times 10^{(L_{eq}(night)+10)/10} \right] - 13.8$	
Volume Adjustment:	$C_N = 10 \log \left(\frac{N_T}{20} \right),$	Rail Yards and Shops
	$= 10 \log(N_T),$	Layover Tracks
	$= 10 \log(N_T),$	Crossovers
	$= 10 \log \left(\frac{N_B}{100} \right),$	Bus Storage Yard
	$= 10 \log \left(\frac{N_B}{200} + \frac{N_S}{60} \right),$	Bus Operating Facility
	$= 10 \log \left(\frac{N_B}{20} \right),$	Bus Transit Center
	$= 10 \log \left(\frac{N_F}{4} \right),$	Ferry Terminal
	$= 10 \log \left(\frac{N_A}{1000} \right),$	Parking Garage
	$= 10 \log \left(\frac{N_A}{2000} + \frac{N_B}{24} \right),$	Park & Ride Lot
Duration Adjustment:	$= 10 \log(E / 3600),$	Crossing Signals
Other Adjustment:	-5 Noise Barrier at Property Line	
N_T = Number of trains per hour		
N_B = Number of buses per hour		
N_F = Number of ferry boat landings per hour		
N_S = Number of buses serviced and cleaned per hour		
N_A = Number of automobiles per hour		
E = average hourly duration of one event in seconds		
Note: If any of these numbers is zero, then omit that term		

5.3 COMPUTATION OF NOISE EXPOSURE-VS.-DISTANCE CURVES

The previous section results in estimates of noise exposure at 50 feet for each type of project. The following procedure is used to estimate the project noise exposure at other distances, resulting in a noise exposure-vs.-distance curve sufficient for use in a General Assessment. The procedure is as follows:

1. Determine the L_{dn} or L_{eq} at 50 feet for one of the three project types in Section 5.2.
2. Select the appropriate distance correction curve from Figure 5-2.
3. Apply the Distance Corrections ($C_{distance}$) to the noise exposure at 50 feet using:

$$L_{dn}(or L_{eq})|_{at new distance} = L_{dn}(or L_{eq})|_{at 50 feet} - C_{distance}$$

4. Plot the noise exposure curve as a function of distance. This curve will be used to determine the noise impact contour for the first row of unobstructed buildings. This plot can be used to display noise from both unmitigated and mitigated conditions in order to assess the benefits from mitigation measures.
5. For second row receivers and beyond, it is necessary to account for shielding attenuation from rows of intervening buildings. Without accounting for shielding, impact may be substantially over-estimated. Use the following general rules of thumb to determine the effect of shielding from intervening rows of buildings:
 - Assign -4.5 dB of shielding attenuation for the *first* row of intervening buildings only.
 - Assign -1.5 dB of shielding attenuation for each subsequent row, up to a maximum total attenuation of 10 dB.

Figure 5-2 can then be used to develop a curve of noise exposure vs. distance when there is shielding. The curve of noise exposure as a function of this distance will be used to determine the location of the noise impact contours.

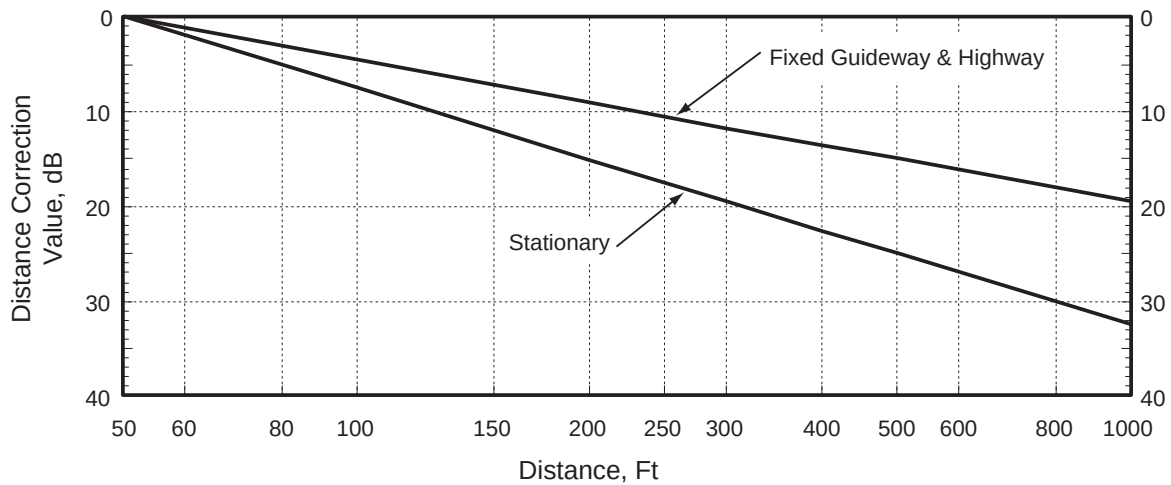


Figure 5-2. Curves for Estimating Exposure vs. Distance in General Noise Assessment

5.4 ESTIMATING EXISTING NOISE EXPOSURE

The existing noise in the vicinity of the project is required to determine the noise impact according to the criteria described in Chapter 3. Recall that impact is assessed based on a combination of the existing ambient noise exposure and the additional noise exposure that will be caused by the project. In the Detailed Analysis, the existing noise exposure is based on noise measurements at representative locations in the community. It is generally a good idea to base all estimates of existing noise on measurements, especially at locations known to be noise-sensitive. However, measurements are not always available at the General Assessment stage. This section describes how to estimate the existing noise in the project study area from general data available early in project planning. The procedure uses Table 5-7, where a neighborhood's existing noise exposure is based on proximity to nearby major roadways or railroads or on population density. For areas near major airports, published aircraft noise contours can also be used to estimate the existing noise exposure. The process is as follows:

1. **Mapping:** Obtain scaled mapping and aerial photographs showing the project location and alternatives. A scale of 1" = 200' or 400' is convenient for the accuracy needed in the noise assessment. The size of the base map should be sufficient to show distances of at least 1000' from the center of the alignment or property center, depending on whether the project is a guideway/roadway or a stationary facility.
2. **Identify Sensitive Receivers:** Review the maps, together with the most current land use information, to determine the proximity of noise-sensitive land uses to the project and to the nearest major roadways and railroad lines. When necessary, windshield surveys or more detailed land use maps may be used to confirm the location of sensitive receivers. For land uses more than

1000 feet from major roadways or railroad mainlines (see definitions in Table 5-7), obtain an estimate of the population density in the immediate area, expressed in people per square mile.

3. Use Table 5-7 to Estimate Existing Noise Exposure: Existing noise exposure is estimated by first looking at a site's proximity to major roads and railroad lines. If these noise sources are far enough away that ambient noise is dominated by local streets and community activities, then the estimate is made based on population density. The decision of which to use is made by comparing the noise levels from each of the three categories, roadways, railroads and population density, and selecting the highest level. In case of a lightly used railroad, one train per day or less, select the population density category.

Major roadways are separated into two categories: "Interstates," or roadways with four or more lanes that allow trucks; and "Others," parkways without trucks and city streets with the equivalent of 75 or more heavy trucks per hour or 300 or more medium trucks per hour. The estimated roadway noise levels are based on data for light to moderate traffic on typical highways and parkways using FHWA highway noise prediction procedures. Where a range of distances is given, the predictions are made at the outer limit, thereby underestimating the traffic noise at the inner distance. For highway noise, distances are measured from the centerline of the near lane for roadways with two lanes, while for roadways with more than two lanes the distance is measured from the geometric mean of the roadway. This distance is computed as follows:

$$D_{GM} = \sqrt{(D_{NL})(D_{FL})}$$

where D_{GM} is the distance to the geometric mean, D_{NL} and D_{FL} are distances to the nearest lane and farthest lane centerlines, respectively.

For railroads, the estimated noise levels are based on an average train traffic volume of 5-10 trains per day at 30-40 mph for main line railroad corridors, and the noise levels are provided in terms of L_{dn} only. Distances are referenced to the track centerline, or in the case of multiple tracks, to the centerline of the rail corridor. Because of the intermittent nature of train operations, train noise will affect the L_{eq} only during certain hours of the day, and these hours may vary from day to day. Therefore, to avoid underestimating noise impact when using the one-hour L_{eq} descriptor, it is recommended that the L_{eq} at sites near rail lines be estimated based on nearby roadways or population density unless very specific train information is available.

In areas away from major roadways, noise from local streets or in neighborhoods is estimated using a relationship determined during a research program by the U.S. EPA.⁽²⁾ EPA determined that ambient noise can be related to population density in locations away from transportation corridors, such as airports, major roads and railroad tracks, according to the following relation:

$$L_{dn} = 22 + 10\log(p) \quad (\text{in dBA})$$

where p = population density in people per square mile.

Table 5-7. Estimating Existing Noise Exposure for General Assessment

Distance from Major Noise Source ¹ (feet)			Population Density (people per sq mile)	Noise Exposure Estimates			
Interstate Highways ²	Other Roadways ³	Railroad Lines ⁴		L _{eq} Day	L _{eq} Evening	L _{eq} Night	L _{dn}
10 - 50				75	70	65	75
50 - 100				70	65	60	70
100 - 200				65	60	55	65
200 - 400				60	55	50	60
400 - 800				55	50	45	55
800 and up				50	45	40	50
	10 - 50			70	65	60	70
	50 - 100			65	60	55	65
	100 - 200			60	55	50	60
	200 - 400			55	50	45	55
	400 and up			50	45	40	50
		10 - 30		--	--	--	75
		30 - 60		--	--	--	70
		60 - 120		--	--	--	65
		120 - 240		--	--	--	60
		240 - 500		--	--	--	55
		500 - 800		--	--	--	50
		800 and up		--	--	--	45
			1 - 100	35	30	25	35
			100 - 300	40	35	30	40
			300 - 1000	45	40	35	45
			1000 - 3000	50	45	40	50
			3000 - 10000	55	50	45	55
			10000 - 30000	60	55	50	60
			30000 and up	65	60	55	65

NOTES:

¹ Distances do not include shielding from intervening rows of buildings. General rule for estimating shielding attenuation in populated areas: Assume 1 row of buildings every 100 ft; -4.5 dB for the first row, -1.5 dB for every subsequent row up to a maximum of -10 dB attenuation.

² Roadways with 4 or more lanes that permit trucks, with traffic at 60 mph.

³ Parkways with traffic at 55 mph, but without trucks, and city streets with the equivalent of 75 or more heavy trucks per hour and 300 or more medium trucks per hour at 30 mph.

⁴ Main line railroad corridors typically carrying 5-10 trains per day at speeds of 30-40 mph.

In areas near major airports, published noise contours can be used to estimate the existing noise exposure. The L_{dn} from such contours should be applied if greater than the estimates of existing noise from other sources at a given location.

5.5 DETERMINING NOISE IMPACT CONTOURS

It is often desirable to draw noise impact contours on the land use map mentioned in the previous section to aid the impact inventory. Once the contours are on the map, the potential noise impacts can be estimated by counting the buildings inside the contours.

The first step is to identify the noise-sensitive neighborhoods and buildings and estimate existing noise exposure following the procedures described in Section 5.4. The estimate of existing noise exposure is used along with the noise impact criteria in Figure 3-1 to determine how much additional noise exposure would need to be created by the project before there would be Moderate Impact or Severe Impact.

The next step is to determine the distances from the project boundary to the two impact levels using the noise exposure-vs.-distance curves from Section 5.3. Plot points on the map corresponding to those distances in the neighborhood under study. Continue this process for all areas surrounding the project. The plotted points are connected by lines to represent the noise impact contours.

Alternatively, if it is desired to plot specific decibel-level noise contours, for example, 65 dBA, the distances can also be determined directly from the approach described in Section 5.3. Again, the points associated with a given decibel level are plotted on the map and connected by lines to represent that contour.

Locations of points will change with respect to the project boundary as the existing ambient exposure changes, as project source levels change, and as shielding effects change. In general, the points should be placed close enough to allow a smooth curve to be drawn. For a General Assessment, the contours may be drawn through buildings and salient terrain features as if they were not present. This practice is acceptable considering the level of detail associated with a project in its early stages of development. Examples 5-1 and 5-4 describe the development of noise contours, with illustrations in Figures 5-3 and 5-4.

5.6 INVENTORY NOISE IMPACT

The final step in the General Assessment is to develop an inventory of noise-impacted land uses. Using the land-use information and noise impact contours from Sections 5.4 and 5.5, it should be possible to locate which buildings are within the impact contours. In some cases it may be necessary to supplement the land-use information or determine the number of dwelling units within a multi-family building with a visual survey. If the objective is to compare and contrast major alignment or modal alternatives on the basis of noise impact, as in an Alternatives Analysis/Draft EIS, it may not be necessary to identify every different type of noise-sensitive land use. The inventory might be limited to only a few types, for example, residential and public institutional uses.

The steps for developing the inventory are:

1. Construct tables for all the noise-sensitive land uses identified in the three land-use categories from Section 5.4.
2. Tabulate buildings and sites that lie between the impact contours and the project boundary. For residential buildings, an estimate of the number of dwelling units is satisfactory. This is done for each alternative being considered.
3. Prepare summary tables showing the number of buildings (and estimated dwelling units, if available) within each impact zone for each alternative. Various alternatives can be compared in this way, including those with and without noise mitigation measures.
4. Determine the need for mitigation based on the policy considerations discussed in Section 3.2.4 and the application guidelines provided in Section 6.8.

Example 5-1. General Noise Assessment for a Commuter Rail System in an Existing Abandoned Railroad Right of Way

The following example illustrates the General Noise Assessment procedure for a new fixed-guideway project. The hypothetical project is a commuter rail system to be built within the abandoned right-of-way of a railroad. The example covers a segment of the corridor that passes through a densely developed area with population density of 25,000 people per square mile in mixed single-family and multi-family residential land use as shown in Figure 5-3. The example is presented in two parts: first, a segment where the rail line is grade-separated and a horn is not sounded; and second, an at-grade street-rail crossing where the horn is sounded.

Assumptions for Example

The assumptions for the project are as follows:

- **Project Corridor:** Existing population density is 25,000 people per square mile.

- **Commuter Rail System:** Commuter train with one locomotive and a three car consist on a double-track at-grade system with welded rail. Trains operate with 20-minute headways during peak hours, and 1-hour headways during off-peak. Speeds are approximately 40 mph along the corridor.
- **Operating Schedule:**

	<u>Period</u>	<u>Headway (minutes)</u>		<u>Trains per hour</u>		<u>Total</u>
		<u>Inbound</u>	<u>Outbound</u>	<u>Inbound</u>	<u>Outbound</u>	
<u>Daytime</u>	7am - 8am	20	20	3	3	6
	8am - 4pm	60	60	1	1	2
	4pm - 6pm	20	20	3	3	6
	6pm - 10pm	60	60	1	1	2
<u>Nighttime</u>	10pm - 11pm	60	60	1	1	2
	11pm - 5am	--	--	--	--	--
	5am - 6am	60	60	1	1	2
	6am - 7am	20	20	1	1	2

Procedure

The Screening Procedure calls for additional analysis for noise-sensitive land use within 375 feet of a commuter rail mainline. Figure 5-3 shows that the closest residences are about 100 ft from the Commuter Rail corridor centerline, thereby requiring further noise analysis. The procedure is summarized as follows:

Part 1. Grade-Separated Street Crossing

Determination of Noise Exposure at 50 feet

1. Determine average hourly daytime and nighttime volumes of train traffic.

Daytime (7am - 10pm):

$$V_d = 42 \text{ trains/15 hours} = 2.8 \text{ trains/hour}$$

Nighttime (10pm - 7am):

$$V_n = 6 \text{ trains/9 hours} = 0.7 \text{ trains/hour}$$

2. Calculate $L_{eq}(\text{day})$, and $L_{eq}(\text{night})$ 50 ft.

From Table 5-1 and 5-2 these levels are determined as follows:

$$\begin{aligned} L_{eqL}(\text{day}) &= SEL_{ref} + 10\log(N_{locos}) - 10\log(S/50) + 10\log(V_d) - 35.6 \\ &= 92 + 10 \log (1) - 10 \log (40/50) + 10 \log (2.8) - 35.6 \\ &= 61.8 \text{ dB} \end{aligned}$$

$$\begin{aligned} L_{eqC}(\text{day}) &= SEL_{ref} + 10 \log (N_{cars}) + 20 \log (S/50) + 10 \log (V_n) - 35.6 \\ &= 82 + 10 \log (3) + 20 \log (40/50) + 10 \log (2.8) - 35.6 \\ &= 53.7 \text{ dB} \end{aligned}$$

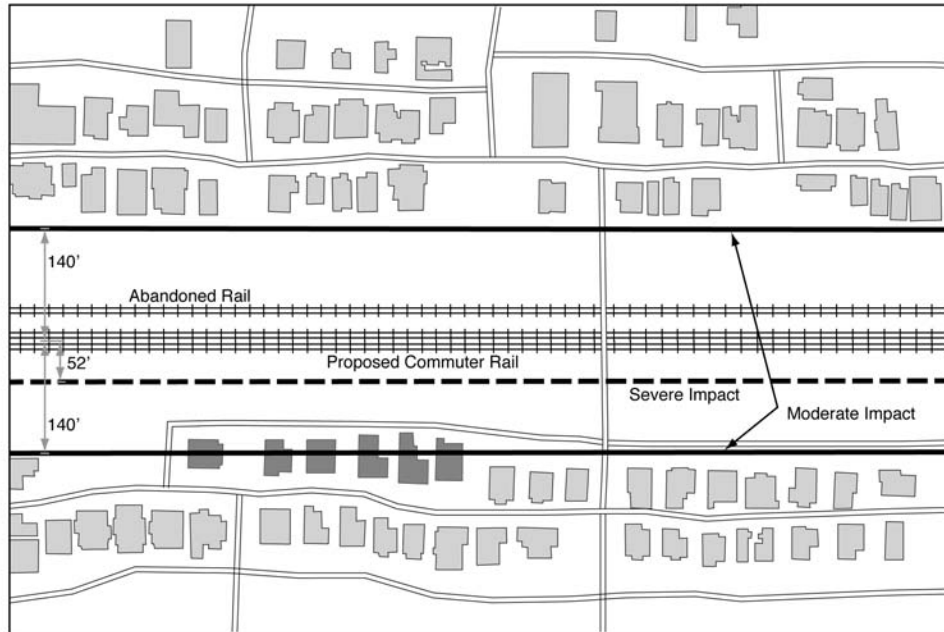


Figure 5-3. Noise Impacts of Commuter Rail

Calculate the total daytime L_{eq} for the locomotive and rail cars.

$$\begin{aligned}
 L_{eqT}(\text{day}) &= 10 \cdot \log(10^{(L_{eqL}/10)} + 10^{(L_{eqC}/10)}) \\
 &= 10 \cdot \log(10^{(62.2/10)} + 10^{(54.1/10)}) \\
 &= 62.4 \text{ dB}
 \end{aligned}$$

Calculate the nighttime L_{eq} for the locomotive and rail cars.

$$\begin{aligned}
 L_{eqL}(\text{night}) &= SEL_{ref} + 10 \log(N_{locos}) - 10 \log(S/50) + 10 \log(V_n) - 35.6 \\
 &= 92 + 10 \log(1) - 10 \log(40/50) + 10 \log(0.7) - 35.6 \\
 &= 55.8 \text{ dB}
 \end{aligned}$$

$$\begin{aligned}
 L_{eqC}(\text{night}) &= SEL_{ref} + 10 \log(N_{cars}) + 20 \log(S/50) + 10 \log(V_n) - 35.6 \\
 &= 82 + 10 \log(3) + 20 \log(40/50) + 10 \log(0.7) - 35.6 \\
 &= 47.7 \text{ dB}
 \end{aligned}$$

Calculate the total nighttime L_{eq} for the locomotive and rail cars.

$$\begin{aligned}
 L_{eqT}(\text{night}) &= 10 \cdot \log(10^{(L_{eqL}/10)} + 10^{(L_{eqC}/10)}) \\
 &= 10 \cdot \log(10^{(55.6/10)} + 10^{(47.5/10)}) \\
 &= 56.4 \text{ dB}
 \end{aligned}$$

3. Calculate project L_{dn} at 50 ft.

From Table 5-2 this level is determined as follows:

$$L_{dn} = 10 \log \left[(15) 10^{L_{eq(day)/10}} + (9) 10^{(L_{eq(night)+10})/10} \right] - 13.8$$

which gives:

$$L_{dn} = 78.2 - 13.8$$

or

$$L_{dn} = 64.4 \text{ dB}$$

Estimate Existing Noise Exposure

4. Estimate existing noise at noise-sensitive sites. Since the existing alignment is on an abandoned railroad, the dominant existing noise source can be described by a "generalized" noise level to characterize a large area. An estimate of the existing noise environment is obtained from Table 5-7 with population density of 25,000 people per square mile, giving an $L_{dn} = 60$ dBA.

From Figure 5-3, unobstructed residences range from 100 to 200 ft from the rail line. Based on Table 5-7 the L_{dn} is 60 dB for the area.

Noise Impact Contours

5. The following table is constructed using the impact criteria curves.

Note: The project criteria for L_{eq} is not shown since L_{eq} only applies to the non-residential receptors.

Existing Noise, L_{dn} or $L_{eq}(\text{day})$	Onset of Moderate Impact	Onset of Severe Impact
	L_{dn}	L_{dn}
60 dB	58 dB	64 dB

6. Distance to impact contours are determined using the curve in Figure 5-2 for "Fixed-Guideway" and the project impact thresholds obtained above. The results are summarized as follows for the residences:

Existing Noise, L_{dn} or $L_{eq}(h)$	Distance to Noise Impact Threshold, feet	
	Moderate Impact	Severe Impact
60 dB	140	52

7. Draw contours for each affected land use, based on the above table and its distance from the rail line. Note that the impact distances listed are in terms of distance to the *centerline of the Commuter Rail corridor*.

8. Within the contours defining "Moderate Impact" are six residential buildings (shaded in Figure 5-3).

Noise Mitigation

9. The procedure is repeated assuming a noise barrier to be placed at the railroad right-of-way line. The barrier serves to reduce project noise from the Commuter Rail by at least 5 dB. This, however, does not affect the project criteria to be used in determining impact. That is, the same existing noise levels (as the case without a barrier) are used to determine these thresholds.

The net effect of the noise barrier is to decrease the Moderate Impact distance from 140 to 60 ft. Hence, the noise barrier eliminates all residential noise impact for this segment of the project area.

Part 2. Crossing At-Grade with Horn Blowing

Now consider the case of an active street crossing of the commuter railroad tracks. The General Assessment method includes source reference levels for horns on moving trains and warning bells (crossing signals) at the street crossing. According to Table 5-1, the horn noise applies to track segments within ¼ mile of the grade crossing. Using the train volumes from Part 1 and the information in Tables 5-1 and 5-2, the day- and nighttime Leqs from sounding the horns are determined at 50 feet as follows:

$$\begin{aligned} L_{eqL}(day)_{horns} &= SEL_{ref} + 10\log(V_d) - 35.6 \\ &= 113 + 10\log(3.1) - 35.6 \\ &= 82.3 \text{ dB} \end{aligned}$$

$$\begin{aligned} L_{eqC}(night)_{horns} &= SEL_{ref} + 10\log(V_n) - 35.6 \\ &= 113 + 10\log(0.7) - 35.6 \\ &= 75.9 \text{ dB} \end{aligned}$$

The L_{dn} at 50 ft. from train horns is the next calculation:

From Table 5-2 this level is determined as follows:

$$L_{dn} = 10\log\left[(15)10^{Leq(day)/10} + (9)10^{(Leq(night)+10)/10}\right] - 13.8$$

which gives:

$$L_{dn} = 84 \text{ dB}$$

At-grade street crossings will have warning bells, typically sounding for 20 seconds for every train pass-by. The total day- and nighttime durations are as follows:

$$\begin{aligned} E_d &= \text{average daytime hourly duration} \\ &= 20 \text{ seconds} \times 3.1 \text{ trains/hour} = 62 \text{ seconds/hour} \end{aligned}$$

$$\begin{aligned} E_n &= \text{average nighttime hourly duration} \\ &= 20 \text{ seconds} \times 0.7 \text{ trains/hour} = 14 \text{ seconds/hour.} \end{aligned}$$

From Table 5-6 for stationary sources:

$$\begin{aligned} L_{eqL(day)_{cs}} &= SEL_{ref} + 10\log(E_d/3600) - 35.6 \\ &= 109 + 10 \log (62/3600) - 35.6 \\ &= 55.8 \text{ dB} \end{aligned}$$

$$\begin{aligned} L_{eqC(night)_{cs}} &= SEL_{ref} + 10 \log (E_n/3600) - 35.6 \\ &= 109 + 10 \log (14/3600) - 35.6 \\ &= 49.3 \text{ dB} \end{aligned}$$

Applying the L_{dn} equation from Table 5-6, $L_{dn, cs} = 57.5 \text{ dB}$.

Compared to horn blowing, the crossing signal noise is negligible.

Noise impact distances are found in the same way as in Part 1, with a new noise level, $L_{dn} = 84 \text{ dB}$.

Again, the existing noise level is used to determine the onset of Moderate and Severe Impacts:

Existing Noise, L_{dn} or $L_{eq}(\text{day})$	Onset of Moderate Impact	Onset of Severe Impact
	L_{dn}	L_{dn}
60 dB	58 dB	64 dB

Distance to impact contours is determined using the curve in Figure 5-2 for "Fixed-Guideway" and the project impact thresholds obtained above. The results are summarized as follows for the residences:

Existing Noise, L_{dn} or $L_{eq}(h)$	Distance to Noise Impact Threshold, feet	
	Moderate Impact	Severe Impact
60 dB	1000	500

Contours are drawn as in Part 1, extending to the distances above for ¼ mile on either side of the grade crossing.

End of Example 5-1

Example 5-2. Example of Highway/Transit Corridor Projects

This example illustrates two cases of highway/transit projects, one where the highway noise dominates and the FHWA procedures should be used and another where the FTA methodology is appropriate.

Case 1: Highway dominates

A new LRT system is planned for the median of a major freeway that carries heavy traffic both day and night. The noise levels at the first row of houses along the freeway were measured during peak hour, mid-day and late evening with hourly Leq readings of 65 dBA, 63 dBA and 60 dBA, respectively. The LRT tracks will be 125 feet from the first row of houses. The LRT operations during peak hour will be 4-car trains at 45 mph, with 5-minute headways in both directions. Late evening service decreases to 2-car trains and 20 minute headways. Referring to Table 5-2, “Rail Vehicles,” the applicable terms for determining the peak hour Leq in this case are: $SEL_{REF} = 82$ dBA; $N = 4$ cars per train; $S = 45$ mph; and $V = 24$ trains per hour. Inserting these parameters into the equation in Table 5-2, the LRT peak-hour noise level is determined to be 65 dBA at 50 feet, and from Figure 5-2, the level at 125 feet is 60 dBA. The corresponding calculation for late evening hourly Leq results in 51 dBA.

FTA is providing a share of the funding for the LRT project, but the State DOT and the FHWA are co-lead agencies because the median requires considerable preparation for the tracks, including replacing bridge piers of street crossings and moving some highway lanes. In this case, the freeway dominates the noise environment in the area both day and night, by 5 dB during peak hour and 9 dB at night. According to Chapter 3, the FHWA procedures are to be used when sufficient evidence shows that highway noise dominates. Consequently TNM is used to calculate the future noise levels at the first row of houses, with a result of peak-hour Leq of 66 dBA. The State has a policy of implementing noise abatement measures if the FHWA Noise Abatement Criteria (NAC) are approached and the increase over existing noise levels is 5 dB or more at residential land use.

Combining the freeway noise and LRT noise during the peak traffic hour by decibel addition results in a combined noise level of 67 dBA.

In this case, no mitigation is proposed because although the combined level reaches the FHWA NAC of 67 dBA for residential land use, the increase in noise over existing conditions is only 2 dB, thereby failing this State’s policy requirement of at least a 5 dB increase over existing levels to justify noise mitigation measures.

Case 2: LRT dominates at night

A new LRT is planned for the median of a major arterial highway used by commuters primarily during rush hours. Traffic volume on the arterial drops considerably during off-peak and nighttime hours. Currently the arterial has signalized intersections, but in the future the cross streets will be grade-separated, but commercial businesses and residential developments will

continue to be accessible with “right-turn-off / right-turn-on”. The existing noise at the nearest homes adjacent to the arterial has been measured, resulting in a peak-hour Leq of 63 dBA and an Ldn of 60 dBA.

The future traffic noise after improvements to the arterial is projected to be 65 dBA for the two-hour morning peak period and the same for the two-hour evening peak period, falling to hourly Leq’s of 60 dBA during the remaining daytime hours and 50 dBA after 10 p.m. Accordingly, Ldn is calculated to be 61 dBA from the arterial at the homes.

The LRT is proposed to be on elevated structure in the median of the arterial, located 125 feet from the nearest homes in the development. The proposed operations at this location are:

- Peak hours (7:00 a.m. to 9:00 a.m. and 5:00 p.m. to 7:00 p.m.): 4-car trains, with 5 minute headways, at 50 mph.
- Off-peak hours (9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. and 7:00 p.m. to 10:00 p.m.): 3-car trains, with 10 minute headways, at 50 mph.
- Night hours (10:00 p.m. to 1:00 a.m.): 2-car trains, with 15 minute headways, at 40 mph.

This train schedule results in an average hourly volume of 15.2 trains per hour, with an average of 3.42 cars per train in both directions during the daytime, and 2-car trains with an average hourly volume of 2.67 trains per hour during the nighttime. According to the equations in Table 5-2 and the propagation curve in Figure 5-2, the Ldn = 63 dBA at these homes. The combined arterial and LRT noise is projected to be Ldn = 64.7 dBA by decibel addition.

FTA procedures are appropriate in this case, since the LRT continues to operate into the nighttime hours and actually dominates the noise environment because the arterial noise diminishes in those hours. Here is a case where the cumulative noise impact curve (Figure 3-2) is applicable because the project included changes to the arterial as well as addition of a new transportation source. With an existing Ldn of 60 dB and a future Ldn of 64.7 dBA, Figure 3-2 indicates the increase of 4.7 dB would cause Moderate Impact.

End of Example 5-2

Example 5-3. General Noise Assessment for a BRT System in an Existing Railroad Right of Way

This example for an uncomplicated Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) project is meant to illustrate the approach for a highway/transit type project using the FTA procedures.

A new BRT corridor is planned in an existing abandoned railroad right-of-way. For this project source,

$$\begin{aligned} SEL_{ref} &= 82 \text{ for buses} \\ S &= 25 \text{ mph} \\ V_d &= (344 \text{ buses})/(15 \text{ hours}) = 22.9 \text{ buses per hour} \\ V_n &= (116 \text{ buses})/(9 \text{ hours}) = 12.9 \text{ buses per hour} \end{aligned}$$

In addition, from Table 5-4,

$$C_s = 15 \text{ for buses}$$

Using the equations in Table 5-4 the resulting L_{eq} 's at 50 feet are:

$$\begin{aligned} L_{eq}(\text{day}) &= 55.5 \\ L_{eq}(\text{night}) &= 53 \end{aligned}$$

This total day and night traffic results in:

$$L_{dn} = 60 \text{ at 50 ft}$$

The surrounding area is residential with 2,500 people per square mile starting approximately 100 feet away from the proposed alignment. Using Table 5-7 the existing noise in the area is 50 dBA.

From Figure 3-1 the impacts thresholds are:

Background Level	Moderate Impact	Severe Impact
50	54	59

Therefore, from Figure 5-2:

Project Level	Onset of Moderate Impact	Onset of Severe Impact
60	125 feet	60 feet

This results in impacts to the residences. A barrier is proposed for mitigation, resulting in a predicted new level of 55 and:

Mitigated Project Level	Onset of Moderate Impact	Onset of Severe Impact
55	60 feet	N/A

The onset of Severe Impact is listed as N/A because the Severe Impact criterion is not exceeded by the project. Mitigation is accomplished by a barrier because the Moderate Impact contour has been moved in to a distance of 60 feet, whereas the residential area lies beyond 100 feet.

End of Example 5-3

Example 5-4. General Noise Assessment for a Transit Center

The following example illustrates the procedure for performing a General Noise Assessment for a stationary source. The example represents a typical FTA-assisted project in an urban area, the siting of a busy transit center in a mixed commercial and residential area, as shown in Figure 5-4.

Assumptions for Example

The assumptions for the Transit Center and its environs are as follows:

- **Main Street Traffic:** Peak hour traffic of 1200 autos, 20 heavy trucks, 300 medium trucks.
- **Population Density:** 12 houses per block; single family homes; 3 people per family.

Block area = 78,750 square feet.

Population density = 9,750 people/square mile.

- **Bus Traffic:**

<u>Period</u>	<u>Hours</u>	<u>Buses per Hour</u>
Peak, Morning	7am - 9am	30
Peak, Afternoon	4pm - 6pm	30
Mid-day	9am - 4pm	15
Evening	6pm - 10pm	12
Early Morning (Night)	6am - 7am	15
Late Night	10pm - 1am	4

Procedure

Before beginning the General Assessment, note that the Screening Procedure calls for additional analysis if any residential or other noise-sensitive land use is within 150 feet of a Transit Center when there are intervening buildings. According to Figure 5-4 the nearest residence is about 140 feet from the center of the proposed Transit Center, thereby calling for further analysis. The General Assessment proceeds as follows:

Determination of Noise Exposure at 50 feet

1. Determine the average number of buses per hour during day and night.

Day (7am - 10pm):

$$N_B(\text{avg day}) = 273 \text{ buses}/15 \text{ hours} = 18.2 \text{ buses/hour average}$$

Night (10pm - 7am):

$$N_B(\text{avg night}) = 27 \text{ buses}/9 \text{ hours} = 3 \text{ buses/hour average}$$

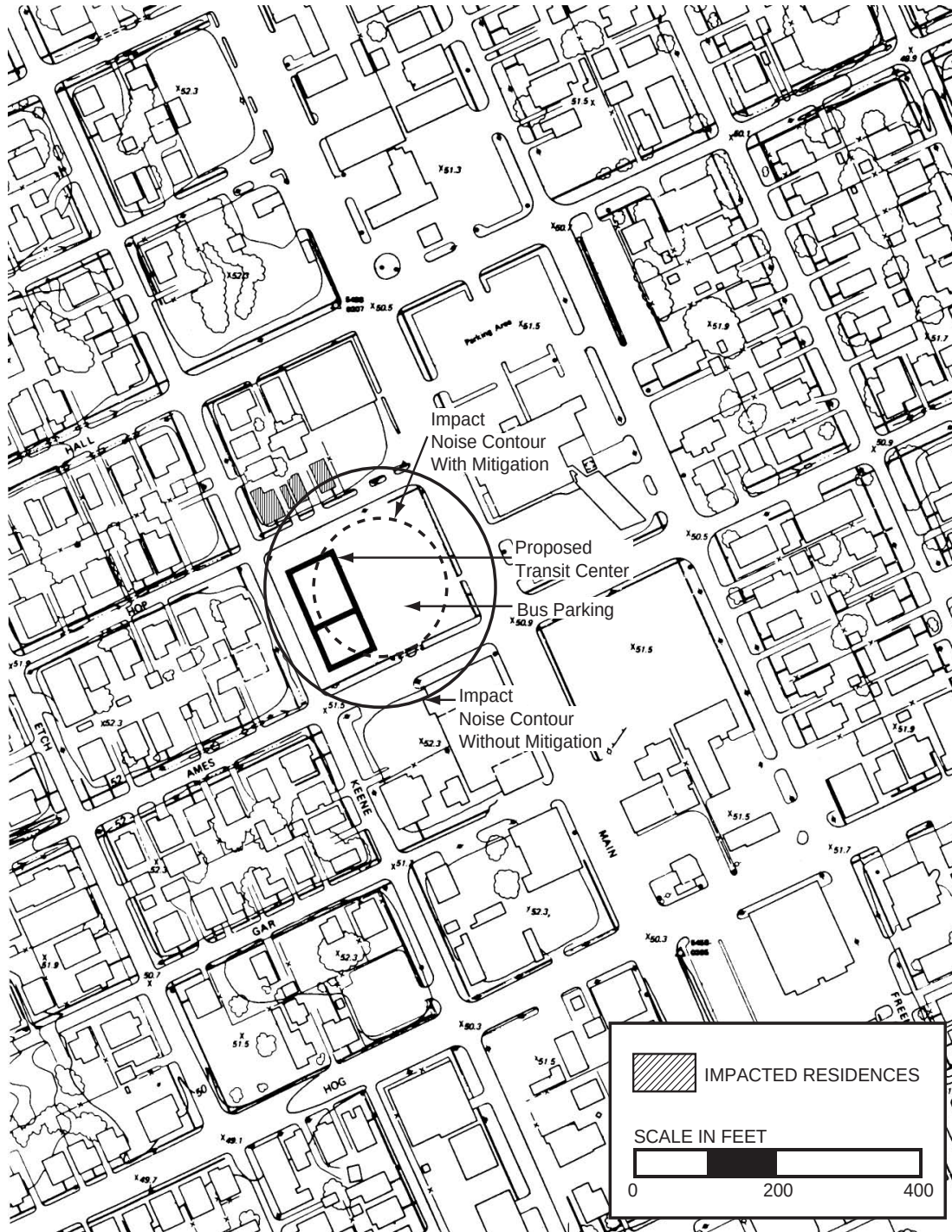


Figure 5-4. Example of Project for General Assessment: Siting of Transit Center in Mixed Commercial/Residential Area

2. Calculate $L_{eq}(day)$ and $L_{eq}(night)$ at 50 feet, assuming no noise barrier.

From Table 5-5 and Table 5-6 the levels are determined as follows:

$$\begin{aligned}L_{eq}(day) &= SEL_{ref} + C_N - 35.6 \\&= 101 + 10 \log (18.2/20) - 35.6 \\&= 65 \text{ dB}\end{aligned}$$

$$\begin{aligned}L_{eq}(night) &= SEL_{ref} + C_N - 35.6 \\&= 101 + 10 \log (3/20) - 35.6 \\&= 57 \text{ dB}\end{aligned}$$

3. Calculate L_{dn} at 50 ft for the project.

From Table 5-6 the level at 50 feet is determined as follows:

$$L_{dn} = 10 \log [(15)10^{L_{eq}(day)/10} + (9)10^{(L_{eq}(night)+10)/10}] - 13.8$$

which gives:

$$\begin{aligned}L_{dn} &= 79.7 - 13.8 \\ \text{or } L_{dn} &= 66 \text{ dB}\end{aligned}$$

Estimate Existing Noise Exposure

4. Estimate existing noise at noise-sensitive sites from the dominant noise source, either major roadways or local streets (population density).

Roadway Noise Estimate: The traffic on Main Street qualifies this street for the "Other Major Roadway" category in Table 5-7. According to the map, the nearest residence is 275 feet from the edge of Main Street. The table shows existing $L_{dn} = 55$ dB at this distance for representative busy city street traffic.

Population Density Noise Estimate: As a check on which ambient noise category to use, noise from local streets is estimated from the population density of 9,750 people/square mile. Table 5-7 indicates the L_{dn} should be approximately 55 dB.

The existing noise level associated with the residential neighborhood is therefore taken to be $L_{dn} = 55$ dB. In case the two estimates are different, use the lower L_{dn} value.

Noise Impact Contours

5. Distance to Impact Contours: For an existing noise exposure of 55 dB, the noise impact criteria indicate that the onset of Moderate Impact will occur at a project noise level of 56 dB, and onset of Severe Impact will occur at 62 dB. The next step is to determine the distances from the center of the property at which these levels are reached. This is accomplished by use of Figure 5-2, the exposure-vs-distance curve. With the project noise level at 50 feet given as 66 dB and the two

impact levels at 56 dB and 62 dB, the differences are 10 dB and 4 dB, respectively. Using the curve in Figure 5-2 labeled "Stationary" source, the distance to where the project level drops 10 dB is approximately 160 feet, and 4 dB attenuation occurs at about 80 feet. Consequently, the Moderate Impact contour occurs about 140 feet from the center of the property and the Severe Impact contour occurs at 80 feet.

6. Draw Contours: Lines are drawn at 80 feet and 140 feet from the center of the property of the proposed Transit Center. These lines represent the noise impact contours. (Note in Figure 5-4 the Severe Impact contour is left out for clarity: it is just within the dashed line representing the Moderate Impact contour after mitigation.)
7. Assessment: Within, or touching, the contour defining "Moderate Impact" are three residential buildings (shaded in Figure 5-4). No residences are within the "Severe Impact contour."

Noise Mitigation

8. Noise Barrier: The process is repeated with a hypothetical noise barrier at the property line on the residential side of the Transit Center. This would consist of a wall approximately 15 feet high partially enclosing the transit center, sufficient to screen the residences but not the commercial block facing Main Street. According to Table 5-6, the approximate noise barrier effect is -5 dB. Repeating the procedure above, the effect of the noise barrier is to shrink the Moderate Impact contour to 90 feet and the Severe Impact contour to 45 feet, which in this example eliminates all adverse effect on the residences.

End of Example 5-4

REFERENCES

1. U.S. Department of Transportation, Federal Highway Administration, *FHWA Traffic Noise Model User's Guide*, Report FHWA-PD-96-009, Washington, DC, January 1998. In addition, *FHWA Traffic Noise Model User's Guide (Version 2.5 Addendum)*, April 2004.
2. U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, "Population Distribution of the United States as a Function of Outdoor Noise Level," Report 550/9-74-009, June 1974.

6. DETAILED NOISE ANALYSIS

This chapter describes the detailed computation of both project and existing noise levels for a comprehensive assessment of project noise impact. The main purpose of this chapter is to provide a procedure that allows prediction of impact and assessment of the effectiveness of mitigation with greater precision than can be achieved with the General Assessment. In some cases, decisions on appropriate mitigation measures can be made based on the results of the General Assessment. When a more detailed evaluation of mitigation measures is needed, the procedures in this chapter should be followed.

It is important to recognize that use of the Detailed Analysis methods will not provide more accurate results than the General Assessment unless more detailed and specific input data are used. In the case of a transit center, for example, the General Assessment provides a source level at a reference distance from the center of the site based on the number of buses at the facility during each hour. Thus, the only information needed for a General Assessment of the transit center is the site location and hourly bus volumes. However, a Detailed Analysis would require specific information on the locations, reference levels, traffic volumes and duration of operations for individual sources that contribute to the total noise output of the transit center. Such information would include a detailed design plan for the facility, the locations of idling buses and the idling durations, as well as the bus and automobile traffic patterns and volumes. A Detailed Analysis cannot be done until such information is available.

Detailed Noise Analysis is appropriate in two main circumstances: first, for a major fixed-guideway project after the preferred mode and alignment have been selected; and second, for any other transit project where potentially severe impacts are identified at an early stage. For fixed-guideway projects, once the preferred mode and alignment are established, the project sponsor begins preliminary engineering and works to complete the environmental impact assessment, usually with a Final EIS. Information required for the Detailed Noise Analysis is generally available at the preliminary engineering stage; such information includes hourly operational schedules during day and night, speed profiles, plan and profiles of guideways, locations of access roads, and landform topography including terrain and building features.

Even for relatively minor transit projects, noise impacts are likely to occur whenever the project is in close proximity to noise-sensitive sites, particularly residences. Some examples are: (1) a terminal or station sited adjacent to a residential neighborhood; (2) a maintenance facility located near a school; (3) a storage yard adjacent to residences; and (4) an electric substation located adjacent to a hospital. As with the larger fixed-guideway projects mentioned above, a Detailed Noise Analysis for these projects will require information normally developed at the preliminary design stage.

The procedures of this chapter include everything needed for a fully detailed transit noise analysis. They are aimed at major transit projects that have enough lead time for thorough environmental analysis. They need not be followed to the letter; they can be tempered by competent engineering judgment and adapted somewhat to specific project constraints.

This chapter employs equations as the primary mode of computation, rather than graphs or tables of numbers, in order to facilitate the use of spreadsheets and/or programmable calculators. Moreover, these equations and their supporting text have been streamlined to provide as concise a view of the Detailed Noise Analysis as possible. As a result, basic noise concepts are not repeated in this chapter.

The steps in the procedure appear in Figure 6-1 and are described below. They parallel the steps for the General Noise Assessment, though they are more refined in the prediction of project noise and subsequent evaluation of mitigation measures.

1. Receivers of Interest. Select receivers of interest, guided by Section 6.1. The number of receivers will depend upon the land use in the vicinity of the proposed project and the extent of the study area defined by the Screening Procedure. If a General Assessment has been done, this will give a good indication of the extent of potential impacts.
2. Project Noise. Determine whether the project is primarily a fixed-guideway transit, highway/transit, or stationary facility. Note that a major fixed-guideway system will have stationary facilities associated with it, and that a stationary facility may have highway/transit elements associated with it. Identify the project noise sources that are in the vicinity of receivers of interest. For these sources, determine the source reference noise in terms of SEL from the tables in Section 6.2. Each reference SEL pertains to reference operating conditions for stationary sources or to one vehicle passby under reference operating conditions for fixed-guideway and highway/transit sources. These reference levels should incorporate source-noise mitigation only if such mitigation will be incorporated into the system specifications. For example, if the specifications include vehicle noise limits which may not be exceeded, these limits should be used to determine the reference level, and this level should be used in the analysis rather than the standard, tabulated reference level. Convert each source SEL to noise exposure (L_{dn} or $L_{eq}(h)$) at 50 feet, for the appropriate project operating parameters, using additional equations in Section 6.2.
3. Propagation and Summation of Project Noise at Receivers of Interest. Draw a noise exposure-vs.-distance curve for each relevant source, using the equations in Section 6.3. This curve will show source noise as a function of distance, accounting for shielding along the path, as well as any

propagation-path mitigation that will be included in the project. From these curves, determine the total project noise exposure at all receivers of interest by combining the levels from all relevant sources (Section 6.4).

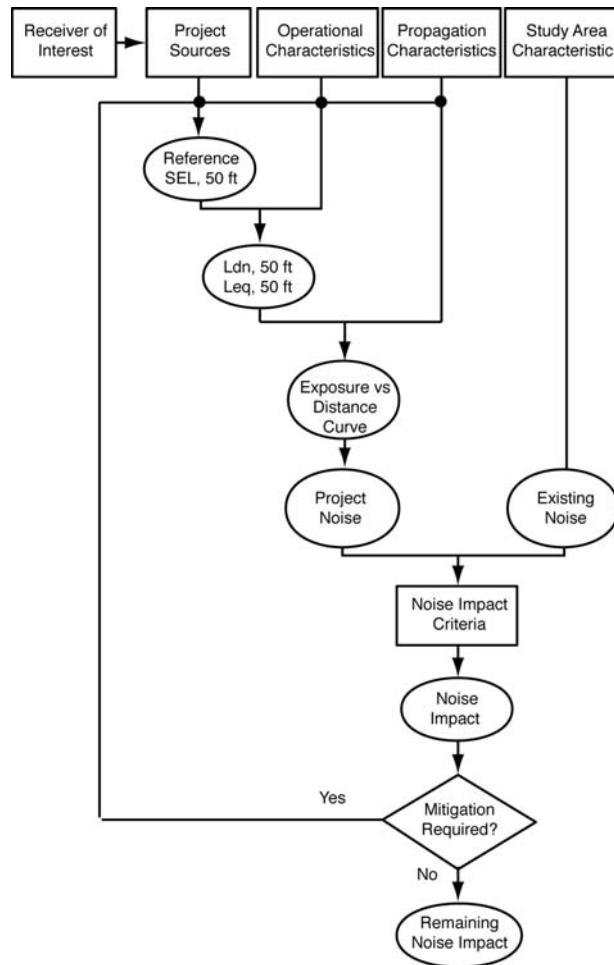


Figure 6-1. Procedure for Detailed Analysis

4. Existing Noise in the Study Area. Estimate the existing noise exposure at each receiver of interest, using the methods in Section 6.6.
5. Noise Impact Assessment. Assess noise impact at each receiver of interest using the procedures in Section 6.7 which incorporate the noise impact criteria of Chapter 3.
6. Mitigation of Noise Impact. Where the assessment shows either Severe Impact or Moderate Impact, evaluate alternative mitigation measures referring to Section 6.8. Then loop back to modify

the project-noise computations, thereby accounting for the adopted mitigation, and reassess the remaining noise impact.

6.1 RECEIVERS OF INTEREST

The steps in identifying the receivers of interest, both the number of receivers needed and their locations, are shown in Figure 6-2. Later sections discuss the measurement/computation of ambient noise, the computation of project noise, and the resulting assessment of noise impact that is done for each receiver. The basic steps, which are discussed in the following subsections, are:

1. Identify all noise-sensitive land uses.
2. Find individual receivers of interest. Examples are isolated residences and institutional resources such as schools.
3. Cluster residential neighborhoods and other relatively large noise-sensitive areas.

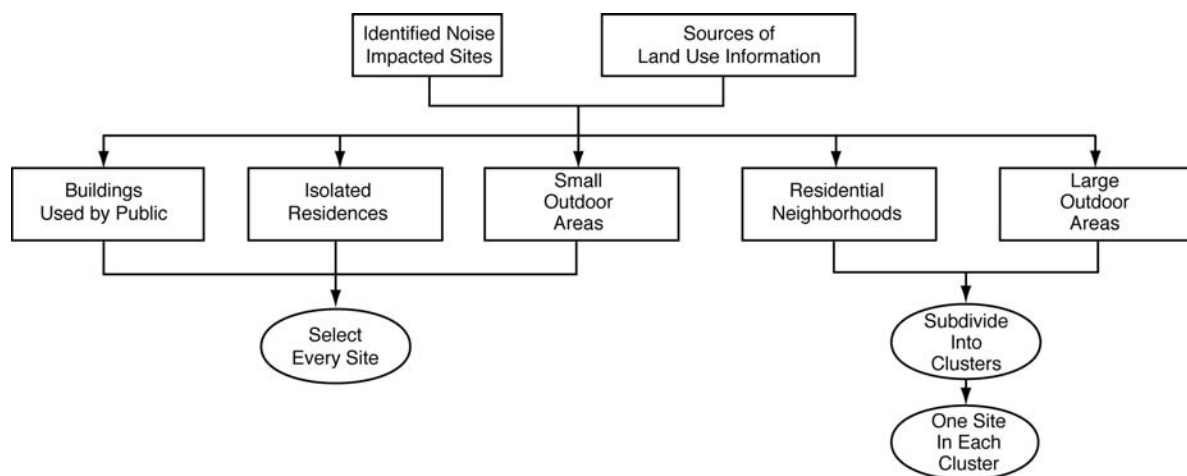


Figure 6-2. Guide to Selecting Receivers of Interest

6.1.1 Identifying Noise-Sensitive Land Uses

A Detailed Noise Analysis should usually be performed on all noise-sensitive land uses where impact is identified by the General Noise Assessment. If a General Noise Assessment has not been done, but there appears to be potential for noise impacts, all noise-sensitive sites within the area defined by the noise screening procedure should be included. In areas where ambient noise is low, the assessment will include land uses that are farther from the proposed project than for areas with higher ambient levels.

Some of the land-use materials and methods that can be helpful in locating noise-sensitive land uses in the vicinity of the proposed project include:

- **Land-use maps**, prepared by regional or local planning agencies or by the project staff. Area-wide maps often do not have sufficient detail to be of much use. However, they can provide broad guidance and may suggest residential pockets hidden within otherwise commercial zones. Of more use are project-specific maps which provide building-by-building detail on the land nearest the proposed project.
- **USGS maps**, prepared by the United States Geological Survey generally at 2000-foot scale. These maps contain details of house placement, except in highly urbanized areas, and generally show the location of all schools and places of worship, plus many other public-use buildings. In addition, the topographic contours on these maps may be useful later during noise computation.
- **Road and town maps**. These can supplement the USGS maps, are generally more up-to-date, and may be of larger scale.
- **Aerial photographs**, especially those of 400-foot scale or better. When current, aerial photos are valuable in locating all potential noise-sensitive land uses close to the proposed project. In addition, they can be useful in determining the distances between receivers and the project.
- **Windshield survey** of the corridor. Definitive identification of noise-sensitive sites is accomplished by a windshield survey in which the corridor is driven and land uses are annotated on base maps. The windshield survey, supplemented by footwork where needed, is especially useful in identifying newly-constructed sites and in confirming land uses very close to the proposed project.
- **Geographic Information Systems (GIS)**. Mapping needed for identifying noise-sensitive land uses is often available in electronic GIS format. GIS data may include land parcels, building structures, aerial photography and project-specific information. These data may be obtained during the project study or from local or regional agencies that store and maintain GIS data. Using electronic GIS data has advantages over paper mapping in being able to automate the process of identifying noise-sensitive land use and accurately being able to determine their distances to the project alignment.

Table 6-1 contains the types of land use of most interest in the impact assessment, separated into three types of land use. If noise impact was identified at other types of buildings/areas with noise-sensitive use by the General Noise Assessment, these should be selected also.

6.1.2 Selecting Individual Receivers of Interest

Select as an individual receiver of interest: (1) every major noise-sensitive building used by the public; (2) every isolated residence; and (3) every relatively small outdoor noise-sensitive area. Use judgment here to avoid analyzing noise where such analysis is obviously not needed. For example, many roadside motels are not particularly sensitive to noise from outdoors. On the other hand, be careful to include buildings used by the public or outdoor areas which are considered to be particularly noise-sensitive by the community. Isolated residences that are particularly close to the project should certainly be included, while those at some distance may often be omitted or "clustered" together with other land uses, as described in the next section. Use judgment also concerning relatively small outdoor noise-sensitive areas. For example, playgrounds can often be omitted unless they directly abut the proposed project, since noise sensitivity in playgrounds is generally low.

Table 6-1. Land Uses of Interest

Land Uses	Specific Use	Selecting Receivers
Outdoor noise-sensitive areas	Certain parks Historic sites used for interpretation Amphitheaters Passive recreation areas Cemeteries Other outdoor noise-sensitive areas	For relatively small noise-sensitive areas: same as indoor noise-sensitive sites. For relatively large areas: same as for residential areas.
Residences	Single family residences Multi-family residences (apartment buildings, duplexes, etc.)	Select each isolated residence as a receiver of interest. For residential areas, cluster by proximity to project sources, proximity to ambient-noise sources, and location along project line. Choose one receiver of interest in each cluster.
Indoor noise-sensitive sites	Places of worship Schools Hospitals/nursing homes Libraries Public meeting halls Concert halls/auditoriums/theaters Recording/broadcast studios Museums and certain historic buildings Hotels and motels Other public buildings with noise-sensitive indoor use	Select noise-sensitive buildings as separate receivers of interest.

6.1.3 Clustering Residential Neighborhoods and Outdoor Noise-Sensitive Areas

Residential neighborhoods and relatively large outdoor noise-sensitive areas can often be clustered, simplifying the analysis that is required without compromising the accuracy of the analysis. The goal is to subdivide all such neighborhoods/areas into clusters of approximately uniform noise, each containing a collection of noise-sensitive sites. Attempt to obtain uniformity of both project noise and ambient noise, guided by these considerations:

1. In general, project noise drops off with distance from the project. For this reason, project noise uniformity requires nearly equal distances between the project noise source and all points within the cluster. Such clusters will usually be shaped as long narrow strips parallel to the transit corridor and/or circling project point sources such as a maintenance facility. Suggested are clusters within which the project noise will vary over a range of 5 decibels or less. Be guided here by the fact that project noise will drop off approximately 3 decibels per doubling of distance for line sources and 6 decibels per doubling of distance for point sources over open terrain. Drop-off with distance will be faster in areas containing obstacles to sound propagation, such as rows of buildings.
2. Ambient noise usually drops off from non-project sources in the same manner as does noise from project sources. For this reason, clustering for uniform ambient noise will usually result in long narrow strips parallel to major roadways or circling major point sources of ambient noise, such as a manufacturing facility. Suggested are clusters within which the ambient noise will vary over a range

of 5 decibels or less, though this may be hard to judge without measurements. In areas without predominant sources of noise, like highways, ambient noise varies with population density, which is generally uniform along the corridor. In situations where ambient noise tends to be uniform, the clusters can encompass relatively large areas.

After defining the cluster, select one receiver as representative in each cluster. Generally choose the receiver closest to the project and at an intermediate distance from the predominant sources of existing noise. Detailed procedures for clustering appear in Appendix C along with an example of clustering for a segment of rail line. This method will generally result in an adequate selection of receivers along the corridor or surrounding the site.

6.2 PROJECT NOISE

Once receivers have been selected, projections of noise from the project must be developed for each receiver. This section describes the first step, calculating the noise exposure at an equivalent distance of 50 feet from each project noise source. As shown in Figure 6-3, the basic procedures for the computation are: (1) Separate nearby sources into these source-type categories: fixed-guideway sources, highway/transit sources, and stationary sources; (2) Determine the reference SEL for each source; and (3) Use the projected source operating parameters to convert each reference SEL to noise exposure (either L_{dn} or $L_{eq}(h)$) at 50 feet.

Table 6-2 lists many of the noise sources that are involved in transit projects. The right-hand column of the table indicates whether or not each source is a major contributor to overall noise impact. Note that some noise sources, such as track maintenance equipment, create high noise levels but are not indicated as "major." Although such sources are loud, they rarely stay in a neighborhood for more than a day or two; therefore, the overall noise exposure is relatively minor. Computations are required for all major noise sources in this table. The computations for the three basic groups – fixed-guideway sources, highway/transit sources, and stationary sources – appear in separate sections below.

6.2.1 Fixed-Guideway Sources

This section describes the computation of project noise at 50 feet from fixed-guideway sources of transit noise, identified in the second column of Table 6-2.

Step 1: Source SELs at 50 feet

For each major fixed-guideway noise source, first determine the reference SEL at 50 feet, either by measurement or by table look-up. Table 6-3 provides guidance on which method is preferred for each source type. A "NO" implies that the source levels are based on a solid and consistent data base; a "YES" means that a solid data base is not available. In general, measurements are preferred for source types that vary significantly from project to project, including any emerging technology sources. Table look-up is adequate for source types that do not vary significantly from project to project. In general, table look-up is adequate for fewer source types during Detailed Noise Analysis than during General Noise Assessment where less precision is acceptable.

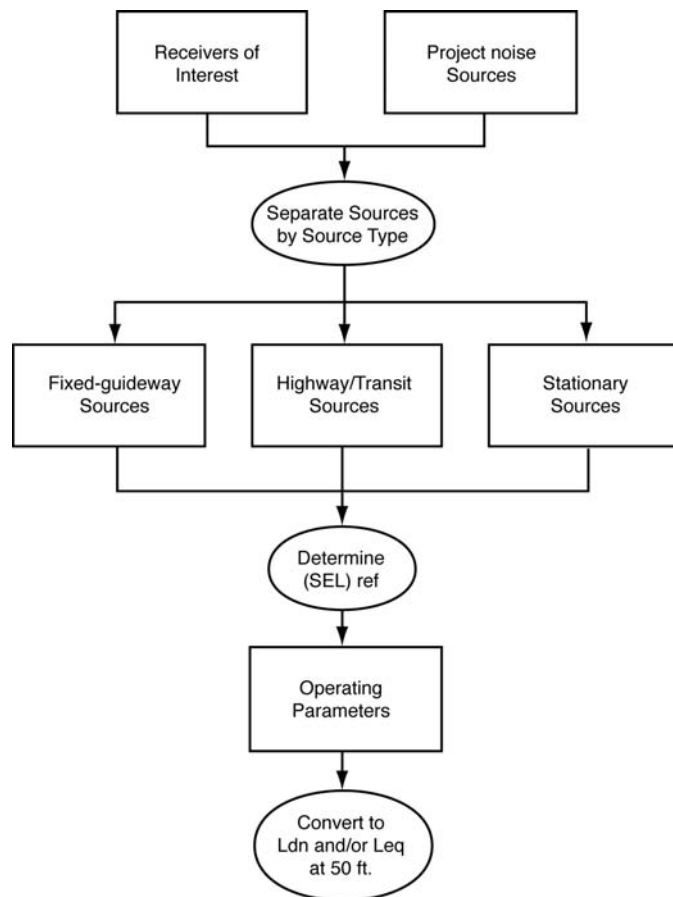


Figure 6-3. Flow Diagram for Determining Project Noise at 50 ft

For sources where measurements are indicated in Table 6-3, Appendix E discusses measurement procedures and conversion of these measurements to the reference conditions of Table 6-3. These procedures have been placed in an appendix because of their relative complexity. For projects where source-noise specifications have been defined (e.g., noise limits are usually included in the specifications for purchase of new transit vehicles), these specifications may be used instead of measurements, after conversion to reference conditions with the equations of Appendix E. This would only be appropriate where there is a firm commitment to adopt the noise specifications in the vehicle procurement documents during final design and adhere to the specifications throughout the procurement, delivery and testing of the vehicles.

For sources where table look-up is indicated in Table 6-3, the table provides appropriate Source Reference SELs. Approximate $L_{\max}$ values also appear in the table for general user information and for comparison with factors such as the noise limits that are included in transit vehicle specifications. As discussed in Chapter 2, $L_{\max}$ is not used directly in the evaluation of noise impact.

Table 6-2. Sources of Transit Noise			
Project Type	Source Type	Actual Source	Major?
Commuter Rail Light Rail Rail Rapid Transit	Fixed-Guideway	Locomotive and rail car passbys	YES
		Horns and whistles	YES
		Crossing signals	YES
		Crossovers/switches	YES
		Squeal on tight curves	YES
		Track-maintenance equipment	NO
	Stationary	Substations	YES
		Chiller plants	NO
Busways Bus Transit Malls	Highway/Transit	Bus passbys	YES
		Buses parking	NO
	Stationary	Buses idling	YES
Automated Guideway Transit Monorail	Fixed-Guideway	Vehicle passbys	YES
	Miscellaneous	Line equipment	NO
Terminals Stations Transit Centers	Fixed-Guideway	Locomotive and rail car passbys	YES
		Crossovers/switches	YES
		Squeal on tight curves	YES
	Highway/Transit	Bus passbys	YES
		Buses parking	NO
		Automobile passbys	NO
	Stationary	Locomotives idling	YES
		Buses idling	YES
		Ferry boats landing, idling and departing at dock	YES
		HVAC equipment	NO
		Cooling towers	NO
Park-and-Ride Lots	Highway/Transit	P/A systems	NO
		Bus passbys	YES
		Buses idling	YES
	Stationary	Automobile passbys	NO
		P/A systems	NO
Traffic Diversion Projects	Highway/Transit	Highway vehicle passbys	YES
Storage Facilities Maintenance Facilities	Fixed-Guideway	Locomotive and rail car passbys	YES
		Locomotives idling	YES
		Squeal on tight curves	YES
		Horns, warning signals, coupling/ uncoupling, auxiliary equipment, crossovers/ switches, brake squeal and air release	YES
	Highway/Transit	Bus passbys	YES
	Stationary	Buses idling	YES
		Yard/shop activities	NO
		Car washes	NO
		HVAC Equipment	NO
		P/A Systems	NO

Table 6-3. Source Reference SELs at 50 Feet: Fixed-Guideway Sources @ 50 mph			
Source	Reference SEL (dBA)	Approximate L _{max} (dBA)	Prefer Measurements?
Rail Cars	82	80	NO
Locomotives – Diesel	92	88	NO
Locomotives – Electric	90	86	NO
Diesel Multiple Unit (DMU)	85	81	YES
AGT - Steel Wheel	80	78	YES
AGT - Rubber Tire	78	75	YES
Monorail	82	80	YES
Maglev	72	70	YES
Transit Car Horns (Emergency)	93	90	NO
Transit Car Whistles	81	78	NO
Locomotive Horns			
At Grade Crossing	113	110	NO
From Crossing to 1/8 mile	113-3*(D _p /660)	110	
From 1/8 mile to ¼ mile	110	110	
D _p = distance from grade crossing parallel to tracks			

Step 2: Conversion to Noise Exposure at 50 feet

Step 1 results in reference SELs at 50 feet. Step 2 is to convert from these reference SELs to noise exposure based on operating conditions and parameters such as train consists, speed, and number of trains per hour. The steps are:

1. Identify operating conditions. Trains with different consists require separate conversion since they will produce different noise exposure. The same is true for trains at different speeds, or under different operating conditions. As guidance here, the following percentage changes in operating conditions will produce an approximate 2-decibel change in noise exposure:
 - 40 percent change in number of locomotives or cars per train
 - 40 percent change in number of trains per hour
 - 40 percent change in number of trains per day, or per night (for computation of L_{dn})
 - 15 percent change in train speed
 - Change of one notch in diesel locomotive throttle setting (e.g. from notch 5 to notch 6)

In general, where operating conditions change by these amounts, separate calculations should be made. Without separate conversions, the risk is that the results may not be accurate enough.

2. Establish relevant time periods. For each of these source types/conditions, decide what are the relevant time periods for all receivers that may be affected by this source. For residential receivers, the two time periods of interest for computation of L_{dn} are: daytime (7 am to 10 pm) and nighttime

(10 pm to 7 am). If the source will affect non-residential receivers, choose the loudest project hour during noise-sensitive activity. Several different hours may be of interest for non-residential receivers depending on the hours the facility is used.

3. Collect input data.

- Source reference SELs for locomotives, rail cars, and warning horns.
- N_{cars} , the number of rail cars in the train.
- N_{locos} , the number of locomotives in the train, if any.
- S , the train speed, in miles per hour.
- T , the average throttle setting of the train's locomotive(s), if it is diesel-electric.¹ If this input is not available, assume a throttle setting of 8.
- For residential receivers of interest:
 - V_d , the average hourly train volume during daytime hours (equals the total number of train passbys between 7 am and 10 pm, divided by 15), and
 - V_n , the average hourly train volume during nighttime hours (equals the total number of train passbys between 10 pm and 7 am, divided by 9).
- For non-residential receivers: V , the hourly train volume for each hour of interest.
- Track type (continuously welded or jointed) and profile (at-grade or elevated).

4. Calculate L_{eq} at 50 ft for each hour of interest.

- Compute $L_{eqL}(h)$ for the locomotive(s) using the first equation in Table 6-4.
- Compute $L_{eqC}(h)$ for the rail car(s) using the second equation in Table 6-4. Use the adjustments indicated in the table, as needed.
- Compute $L_{eqH}(h)$ for the train horn using the third equation in Table 6-4.
- Compute the total $L_{eq}(h)$ using the fourth equation in Table 6-4. Two totals may be necessary: one with the warning horn and one without it. These will pertain to different neighborhoods along the corridor, depending upon whether the horn is sounded in that neighborhood or not.

5. Compute L_{dn} at 50 ft. If the project noise will affect any residential receivers, compute the total train L_{dn} from the fifth equation in Table 6-4. Again two totals may be necessary: one with the warning horn and one without it, as explained above.

¹ Otherwise, this term is not applicable and should be omitted from the equation in Table 6-4.

Table 6-4. Computation of L_{eq} and L_{dn} at 50 feet: Fixed-Guideway Sources	
LOCOMOTIVES[†] Hourly L_{eq} at 50 ft:	$L_{eqL}(h) = SEL_{ref} + 10\log(N_{locos}) + C_T + K\log\left(\frac{S}{50}\right) + 10\log(V) - 35.6$ $where C_T = \begin{cases} 0 & for T < 6 \\ 2(T - 5) & for T \geq 6 \end{cases}$ $and K = -10 \text{ for passenger diesel}; = 0 \text{ for DMU}; = +10 \text{ for electric}$
AIL VEHICLES^{††} Hourly L_{eq} at 50 ft:	$L_{eqC}(h) = SEL_{ref} + 10\log(N_{cars}) + 20\log\left(\frac{S}{50}\right) + 10\log(V) - 35.6$ use the following adjustments as applicable: + 5 → JOINTED TRACK + 3 → EMBEDDED TRACK ON GRADE + 4 → AERIAL STRUCTURE WITH SLAB TRACK
LOCOMOTIVE WARNING HORNS^{†††} Hourly L_{eq} at 50 ft:	$L_{eqH}(h) = SEL_{ref} + 10\log(V) - 35.6$
TRANSIT WARNING HORNS^{†††} Hourly L_{eq} at 50 ft:	$L_{eqH}(h) = SEL_{ref} - 10\log\left(\frac{S}{50}\right) + 10\log(V) - 35.6$
COMBINED Hourly L_{eq} at 50 ft:	$L_{eq}(h) = 10\log\left[10^{\left(\frac{L_{eqL}}{10}\right)} + 10^{\left(\frac{L_{eqC}}{10}\right)} + 10^{\left(\frac{L_{eqH}}{10}\right)}\right]$
Daytime L_{eq} at 50 ft:	$L_{eq}(day) = L_{eq}(h) \Big _{v=v_d}$
Nighttime L_{eq} at 50 ft:	$L_{eq}(night) = L_{eq}(h) \Big _{v=v_n}$
L_{dn} at 50 ft:	$L_{dn} = 10\log\left[(15) \cdot 10^{\left(\frac{L_{eq}(day)}{10}\right)} + (9) \cdot 10^{\left(\frac{L_{eq}(night)+10}{10}\right)}\right] - 13.8$
N_{locos} = average number of locomotives per train N_{cars} = average number of cars per train T = average throttle setting of diesel-powered locomotives and DMU's S = train speed, in miles per hour V = average hourly volume of train traffic, in trains per hour V_d = average hourly daytime volume of traffic, in trains per hour = $\frac{\text{number of trains, 7am to 10pm}}{15}$ V_n = average hourly nighttime volume of train traffic, in trains per hour = $\frac{\text{number of trains, 10pm to 7am}}{9}$	
[†] Assumes a passenger diesel locomotive power rating of approximately 3000 hp ^{††} Includes all commuter rail cars, transit cars, AGT and monorail ^{†††} Based on FRA's horn noise model (www.fra.dot.gov/downloads/RRDev/hornmodel.xls)	

Example 6-1. Computation of L_{eq} and L_{dn} at 50 feet for Fixed-Guideway Source

A commuter train with 1 diesel locomotive and 6 cars will pass close to a residential area at a grade crossing. For this project source,

SEL_{ref}	=	92 for locomotives,
	=	82 for rail cars,
	=	113 for locomotive warning horns at grade crossing

In addition,

N_{cars}	=	6
N_{locos}	=	1
S	=	43 mph
T	=	8
V_d	=	(40 trains)/(15 hours)= 2.667 trains per hour, and
V_n	=	(2 trains)/(9 hours) = 0.222 trains per hour.

The track is also jointed in this vicinity. Using Table 6-4, the resulting daytime L_{eq} 's at 50 feet are as follows:

$L_{eqL}(day)$	=	67.3 for locomotives,
$L_{eqC}(day)$	=	62.1 for cars, and
$L_{eqH}(day)$	=	81.7 for horns.
Total $L_{eq}(day)$	=	81.9 in neighborhoods where the horn is sounded, and
	=	69.3 in neighborhoods where it is not.

Using Table 6-4, the resulting nighttime L_{eq} 's at 50 feet are as follows:

$L_{eqL}(night)$	=	56.5 for locomotives,
$L_{eqC}(night)$	=	51.3 for cars, and
$L_{eqH}(night)$	=	70.9 for horns,
Total $L_{eq}(night)$	=	71.1 with horns, and
	=	57.6 without horns.

Finally, this total day and night traffic results in:

L_{dn}	=	81.6 at 50 ft in neighborhoods where horns are sounded, and
	=	68.7 at 50 ft in neighborhoods where they are not.

(Note: Computation results should always be rounded to the nearest decibel at the end of the computation. In all examples of this chapter, however, the first decimal place is retained in case readers wish to precisely match their own computations against the example computations.)

End of Example 6-1

6.2.2 Highway/Transit Sources

This section describes the computation of project noise at 50 feet for highway/transit sources, identified in the second column of Table 6-2. This method is based on the original FHWA highway noise prediction model, with updated noise emission levels.⁽¹⁾ This model can be used because the vehicle equations are applicable to speeds typical of freely-flowing traffic on city streets and access roads. In Chapter 3 there is a discussion of specific types of projects and conditions for which the FHWA procedures should be used, including TNM, the currently approved highway noise prediction model.

Step 1: Source SELs at 50 feet

Determine the source reference SEL at 50 feet for each "major" highway/transit source near a receiver of interest. As indicated in the fourth column of Table 6-5, it is usually adequate to use the standard Reference SELs of Table 6-5 for highway/transit sources. If measurements are chosen, however, Appendix E discusses the measurement procedures, plus procedures for the conversion of these measurements to reference conditions of Table 6-5. These measurement/conversion procedures have been placed in an appendix because of their relative complexity.

Table 6-5. Source Reference SELs at 50 Feet: Highway/Transit Sources @ 50 mph.			
Source	Reference SEL (dBA)	Approximate L_{max} (dBA)	Prefer Measurements?
Automobiles	74	70	No
Buses (diesel)	82	79	No
Buses (electric trolleybus)	80	77	No
Buses (hybrid) ¹	83	80	Yes

¹Hybrid bus with full-time diesel engine and electric drive motors.

Step 2: Conversion to Noise Exposure

Convert the source reference SELs at 50 feet to actual operating conditions such as actual vehicle speed and number of vehicles per hour. Next convert to noise exposure using the following steps:

1. Identify actual source operating conditions. Noise emission from most transit buses does not depend significantly upon whether the buses are accelerating or cruising. On the other hand, accelerating suburban buses are significantly louder than are cruising suburban buses. For this reason, suburban buses require separate conversion along roadway stretches where they are accelerating. Separate conversion is also needed for all highway/transit vehicles at different speeds, since speed affects noise emissions. As guidance here, the following percentage changes in operating conditions will produce an approximate 2-decibel change in noise exposure:
 - 40 percent change in number of vehicles per hour
 - 40 percent change in number of vehicles per day, or per night (for computation of L_{dn})
 - 15 percent change in vehicle speed.

In general, where operating conditions change by these amounts, separate conversions should be made.

2. Establish relevant time periods. For each of these source types/conditions, decide what are the relevant time periods for all receivers that may be affected by this source. If the source will affect residential receivers, two time periods are of interest to compute L_{dn} : daytime (7 am to 10 pm) and nighttime (10 pm to 7 am). In addition, if the source will affect non-residential receivers, choose the loudest facility hour during noise-sensitive activity. Several different hours may be of interest for non-residential receivers, depending on the hours the facility is used.
3. Collect input data. Gather the following information:
 - Source reference SELs for the vehicle types of concern.
 - S , the average running speed in miles per hour.
 - For residential receivers of interest:
 - V_d , the average hourly vehicle volume during daytime hours (equals the total number of vehicle passbys between 7 am and 10 pm, divided by 15), and
 - V_n , the average hourly vehicle volume during nighttime hours (equals the total number of vehicle passbys between 10 pm and 7 am the next day, divided by 9).
 - For non-residential receivers of interest: V , the hourly vehicle volume for each hour of interest, in vehicles per hour.
4. Calculate L_{eq} at 50 ft for each hour of interest. Compute $L_{eq}(h)$ for the vehicle type using the first equation in Table 6-6.
5. Compute L_{dn} at 50 ft. If this vehicle type will affect any residential receivers, compute the total L_{dn} for the vehicle type using the fourth equation in Table 6-6.

Table 6-6. Computation of L _{eq} and L _{dn} at 50 feet: Highway/Transit Sources		
Hourly L _{eq} at 50 ft:	$L_{eq}(h) = SEL_{ref} + 10\log(V) + C_{emissions} - 10\log\left(\frac{S}{50}\right) - 35.6$	
Daytime L _{eq} at 50 ft:	$L_{eq}(day) = L_{eq}(h)\Big _{v=v_d}$	
Nighttime L _{eq} at 50 ft:	$L_{eq}(night) = L_{eq}(h)\Big _{v=v_n}$	
L _{dn} at 50 ft:	$L_{dn} = 10\log\left[(15)\times 10^{\left(\frac{L_{eq}(day)}{10}\right)} + (9)\times 10^{\left(\frac{L_{eq}(night)+10}{10}\right)}\right] - 13.8$	
Noise Emissions	$= 25\times \log\left(\frac{S}{50}\right)$ → buses $C_{emissions} = 1.6$ → accelerating 3-axle commuter buses $= 40\times \log\left(\frac{S}{50}\right)$ → automobiles	
Other adjustments	-3 → automobiles, open-graded asphalt +3 → automobiles, grooved pavement	
V = hourly volume of vehicles of this type, in vehicles per hour V_d = average hourly daytime volume of vehicles of this type, in vehicles per hour $= \frac{totalvehiclevolume,7amto10pm}{15}$ V_n = average hourly nighttime volume of vehicles of this type, in vehicles per hour $= \frac{totalvehiclevolume,10pmto7am}{9}$ S = average vehicle speed in miles per hour (distance divided by time, excluding stop time at red lights)		
Note: Idling buses appear under Stationary Sources.		

Example 6-2. Computation of L_{eq} and L_{dn} at 50 feet for Highway/Transit Source

A bus route with city buses will pass close to a school that is in session from 8 am to 4 pm on weekdays. Within this time period, the hour of greatest activity for this bus route is 8 am to 9 am. For this project source,

$$\begin{aligned} SEL_{ref} &= 82 \text{ dB} \\ S &= 40 \text{ mph, and} \\ V &= 30 \text{ buses per hour} \end{aligned}$$

Using Table 6-6, the resulting hourly L_{eq} at 50 ft = 59.7 dB.

(Note: Computation results should always be rounded to the nearest decibel at the end of the computation.)

Continuing the example, this same bus also passes close to a residential area. For this project source, SEL_{ref} is the same as above, as is S . In addition,

$$\begin{aligned} V_d &= (200 \text{ buses})/(15 \text{ hours}) = 13.33 \text{ buses per hour, and} \\ V_n &= (20 \text{ buses})/(9 \text{ hours}) = 2.22 \text{ buses per hour.} \end{aligned}$$

Using Table 6-6, the resulting L_{eq} 's at 50 ft are as follows:

$$\begin{aligned} L_{eq}(\text{day}) &= 56.2 \text{ dB and} \\ L_{eq}(\text{night}) &= 48.4 \text{ dB.} \end{aligned}$$

Finally, the total day and night traffic results in L_{dn} at 50 ft = 57.2 dB.

End of Example 6-2

6.2.3 Stationary Sources

This section describes the computation of project noise at 50 feet for stationary sources of transit noise, identified in the second column of Table 6-2.

Step 1: Source SELs at 50 feet

Determine the reference SEL at 50 feet for each major source, either by measurement or by table look-up. Table 6-7 provides guidance on which method is preferred for each source type. In general, measurements are preferred for source types that vary significantly from project to project. For example, curve squeal is highly variable depending on weather conditions, curve radius, and train speed. In general, a standard steel wheel on steel rail system will tend to initiate curve squeal at curves with radii less than 100 times the truck wheelbase. Table look-up is adequate for source types that do not vary significantly from project to project (crossing signals, for example). Ferry boat landings are included in the stationary source category because the noise from the landing remains in one area even though the boats move in and out.

Table 6-7. Source Reference SELs at 50 Feet: Stationary Sources			
Source	Reference SEL (dBA)	Approximate L_{max} (dBA)	Prefer Measurements?
Auxiliary Equipment	101	65	YES
Locomotive Idling	109	73	NO
Rail Transit Idling	106	70	NO
Buses Idling	111	75	NO
Ferry Boat Landing, Idling and Departing	91	78	NO
Ferry Boat Fog Horn	90	84	NO
Track Crossover	100	90	NO
Track Curve Squeal	136	100	YES
Car Washes	111	75	YES
Crossing Signals	109	73	NO
Substations	99	63	NO

For sources where measurements are indicated in Table 6-7, Appendix E discusses the measurement procedures, plus procedures for the conversion of these measurements to the reference conditions of Table 6-7.

For most sources where table look-up is indicated in Table 6-7, the table provides appropriate reference SELs for one typical noise event at 50 feet and of 1-hour duration (3600 seconds). For ferry boats and fog horns, the reference SELs are for one typical noise event at 50 feet. Approximate L_{max} values are also given in the table for general user information.

Layover facilities and transit centers can be the sources of low-frequency noise from idling diesel engines. Sounds with considerable low-frequency components can cause greater annoyance than would be expected based on their A-weighted levels. Low-frequency sounds often cause windows and walls to vibrate resulting in secondary effects in buildings such as rattling of dishes in cupboards and wall-

mounted pictures. The SEL's in Table 6-7 are adjusted to include a factor to take increased annoyance into account. However, for a detailed analysis at locations where such idling takes place for an extended period, the method described in ANSI Standard S12.9-Part 4, Annex D, should be used.⁽²⁾

Step 2: Conversion to Noise Exposure at 50 feet

Step 1 results in reference SELs at 50 feet. Step 2 is to convert from these reference SELs to actual operating conditions, such as actual event durations and numbers of events, and calculate noise exposure at 50 ft. The steps are:

1. Identify actual source durations and numbers of events. The following percentage changes in durations/numbers will produce an approximate 2-decibel change in noise exposure:

- 40 percent change in event duration (e.g. from 30 to 42 minutes)
- 40 percent change in number of events per hour (e.g. from 10 to 14 events per hour).

In general, where durations/numbers change by these amounts, separate conversions should be made.

2. Establish relevant time periods. For each source, determine the relevant time periods for all receivers that may be affected by the source. For residential receivers, the two time periods of interest to compute L_{dn} are: daytime (7 am to 10 pm) and nighttime (10 pm to 7 am). If the source will affect non-residential receivers, choose the loudest facility hour during noise-sensitive activity.

3. Collect input data. Gather the following input information:

- Source reference SELs for each relevant source.
- E, the average duration of one event, in seconds.
- For residential receivers of interest:
 - N_d , the average number of events per hour that occur during the daytime (equals the total number of events between 7 am and 10 pm, divided by 15), and
 - N_n , the average number of events per hour that occur during the nighttime (equals the total number of events between 10 pm and 7 am, divided by 9).
- For non-residential receivers of interest: N, the number of events that occur during each hour of interest, in events per hour.

4. Compute L_{eq} at 50 ft. For each hour of interest, compute the L_{eq} for the source using the first equation in Table 6-8.

5. Compute L_{dn} at 50 ft. If this source will affect any residential receivers of interest, compute the total L_{dn} for the source using the fourth equation in Table 6-8.

Table 6-8. Computation of L_{eq} and L_{dn} at 50 feet: Stationary Sources	
Hourly L_{eq} at 50 ft:	$L_{eq}(h) = SEL_{ref} + 10 \log(N) + 10 \log\left(\frac{E}{3600}\right) - 35.6$
Daytime L_{eq} at 50 ft:	$L_{eq}(day) = L_{eq}(h) \Big _{N=N_d}$
Nighttime L_{eq} at 50 ft:	$L_{eq}(night) = L_{eq}(h) \Big _{N=N_n}$
L_{dn} at 50 ft:	$L_{dn} = 10 \log \left[(15) \times 10^{\left(\frac{L_{eq}(day)}{10}\right)} + (9) \times 10^{\left(\frac{L_{eq}(night)+10}{10}\right)} \right] - 13.8$
$E^\dagger$ = duration of one event, in seconds N = number of events of this type that occur during one hour N_d = hourly average number of events of this type that occur during daytime (7am to 10pm) $\quad = \frac{\text{number that occur between 7 am and 10 pm}}{15}$ N_n = hourly average number of events of this type that occur during nighttime (10pm to 7am) $\quad = \frac{\text{number that occur between 10 pm and 7 am}}{9}$ $\dagger$ Omit the term containing E for ferry boat and fog horn and crossover noise sources	

Example 6-3. Computation of L_{eq} and L_{dn} at 50 feet for Stationary Source

A signal crossing lies close to a school that is in session from 8 am to 4 pm on weekdays. Within this time period, the hour of greatest activity for the signal crossing is 8am to 9am. For this project source,

$$\begin{aligned}
 SEL_{ref} &= 109 \text{ dB} \\
 E &= 25 \text{ seconds (counting both cycles of the signal), and} \\
 N &= 22
 \end{aligned}$$

Using Table 6-8 the resulting $L_{eq}(h) = 65.2$ from 8 to 9 am. (Computation results should always be rounded to the nearest decibel at the end of the computation.)

This same signal crossing lies close to a residential area. For this project source, SEL_{ref} is the same as above, as is E. In addition,

$$\begin{aligned}
 N_d &= (200)/(15 \text{ hours}) = 13.3 \text{ events per hour, and} \\
 N_n &= (12)/(9 \text{ hours}) = 1.33 \text{ events per hour.}
 \end{aligned}$$

Using Table 6-8, the resulting daytime and nighttime L_{eq} 's are:

$$\begin{aligned}
 L_{eq}(day) &= 63.0 \text{ and} \\
 L_{eq}(night) &= 53.0.
 \end{aligned}$$

Finally, using the fourth equation in Table 6-8, the resulting L_{dn} at 50 feet = 63.0 dB.

End of Example 6-3

6.3 PROPAGATION CHARACTERISTICS

Once estimates of noise exposure at 50 feet from each source are available, then propagation characteristics must be taken into account to compute the noise exposure at receivers of interest. The steps, shown in Figure 6-4, for this are: 1) determine the propagation characteristics between each source and the receiver of interest; then, 2) draw a noise exposure-vs.-distance curve outward from each relevant source as a function of distance; and 3) add a final adjustment using the appropriate shielding term based on intervening barriers between source and receiver.

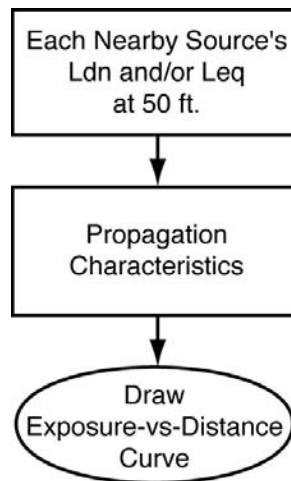


Figure 6-4. Flow Diagram for Determining Project Noise at Receiver Location

6.3.1 Noise Exposure vs. Distance

The following steps result in a noise exposure-vs.-distance curve for each project source:

1. Draw several approximate topographic sections, each perpendicular to the path of moving sources or outward from point sources, similar to those shown in Figure 6-5. Draw separate sections, if necessary, to account for significant changes in topography. Use judgment here to prevent an extreme number of different topographic sections. Often, several typical sections will suffice throughout the transit corridor.
2. For each topographic section, use the relationship illustrated in Figure 6-5 to determine the effective path height, H_{eff} , and from it the Ground Factor, G . Larger Ground Factors mean larger amounts of ground attenuation with increasing distance from the source. As shown in the figure, the effective path height depends upon source heights, which are standardized at the bottom of the figure, and upon receiver heights, which can often be taken as 5 feet for both outdoor receivers and first-floor receivers. With these standard heights, only one H_{eff} (and therefore one Ground Factor)

results from each cross section. For acoustically "hard" (i.e. non-absorptive) ground conditions, G should be taken to be zero.

3. Then for each L_{dn} and each L_{eq} at 50 feet developed earlier in the analysis, plot a noise exposure-vs.-distance curve with L_{dn} or L_{eq} represented on the vertical axis and distance on the horizontal axis using one of the following equations:

$$\begin{aligned}
 L_{dn} \text{ or } L_{eq} &= (L_{dn} \text{ or } L_{eq}) \Big|_{at 50 ft} - 20 \log \left(\frac{D}{50} \right) - 10G \log \left(\frac{D}{50} \right) && \text{for stationary sources} \\
 &= (L_{dn} \text{ or } L_{eq}) \Big|_{at 50 ft} - 10 \log \left(\frac{D}{50} \right) - 10G \log \left(\frac{D}{42} \right) && \text{for fixed-guideway rail car} \\
 & && \text{passbys} \\
 &= (L_{dn} \text{ or } L_{eq}) \Big|_{at 50 ft} - 10 \log \left(\frac{D}{50} \right) - 10G \log \left(\frac{D}{29} \right) && \text{For fixed-guideway} \\
 & && \text{locomotive and rubber-tired} \\
 & && \text{vehicle passbys, highway} \\
 & && \text{vehicle passbys and horns}
 \end{aligned}$$

IN GENERAL: H_{eff} = sum of average path heights on either side of barrier

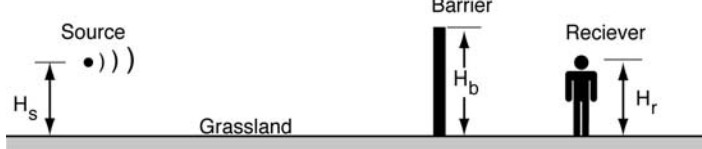
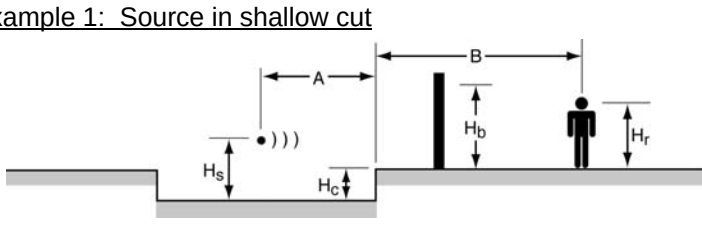
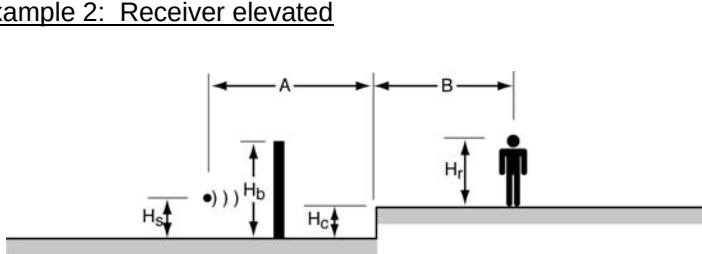
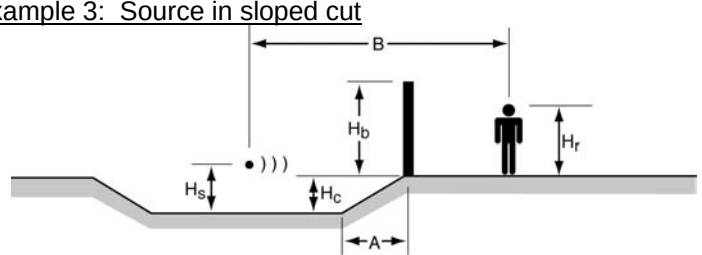
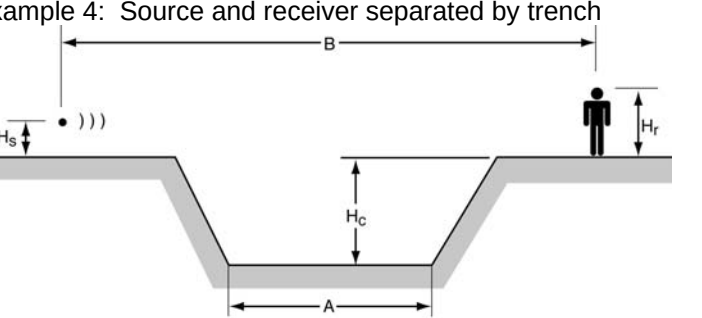
	$H_{eff} = \frac{H_s + 2H_b + H_r}{2} \quad (1)$
Example 1: Source in shallow cut 	For $B \leq \frac{A}{2}$, $H_{eff} = \frac{H_s + 2H_b + H_c + H_r}{2}$ * Otherwise use Equation (1)
Example 2: Receiver elevated 	For $H_b \geq H_c$, $H_{eff} = \frac{H_s + 2H_b - H_c + H_r}{2}$ For $H_b \leq H_c$, $H_{eff} = \frac{H_s + H_c + H_r}{2}$
Example 3: Source in sloped cut 	For $A \leq \frac{B}{2}$, use equation (1) For $A \geq \frac{B}{2}$, $H_{eff} = \frac{H_s + 2H_b + H_c + H_r}{2}$
Example 4: Source and receiver separated by trench 	For $A \geq \frac{B}{2}$, $H_{eff} = \frac{H_s + 2H_c + H_r}{2}$ For $A \leq \frac{B}{2}$, $H_{eff} = \frac{H_s + H_r}{2}$
Source Heights: H_s = 8 ft, trains with diesel-electric locomotives 2 ft, trains without diesel-electric locomotives 0 ft, automobiles 3 ft, 2-axle city buses 8 ft, 3-axle commuter buses Note: Equations for H_{eff} remain valid even when $H_b = 0$.	Ground Factor For soft ground: $G = \begin{cases} 0.66 & H_{eff} \leq 5 \\ 0.75 \left(1 - \frac{H_{eff}}{42} \right) & 5 \leq H_{eff} \leq 42 \\ 0 & H_{eff} \geq 42 \end{cases}$ For hard ground: $G = 0$

Figure 6-5. Computation of Ground Factor G for Ground Attenuation

Example 6-4. Computing Exposure-vs.-Distance Curve for Fixed-Guideway Source

A commuter train will produce the following levels without horn blowing at 50 feet:

$$\begin{aligned}L_{eq}(8-9\text{am}) &= 72 \text{ decibels} \\L_{dn} &= 68 \text{ decibels.}\end{aligned}$$

For sound propagation over grassland with a flat cross-sectional geometry without a noise barrier, and $H_R = 5$ feet:

$$H_{eff} = 6.5 \text{ feet}$$

and from Figure 6-5 the resulting Ground Factor is:

$$G = 0.63$$

Hence the relevant equations from above become:

$$\begin{aligned}L_{eq}(8-9\text{am}) &= 72 - 10 \log(D/50) - 6.3 \log(D/42) \\L_{dn} &= 68 - 10 \log(D/50) - 6.3 \log(D/42)\end{aligned}$$

Plots of these two equations appear in Figure 6-6. From these curves, the noise levels due to this train operation can be determined for a receiver of interest at any distance. The only factor not accounted for is the effect of shielding between source and receiver, which is the subject of the next section.

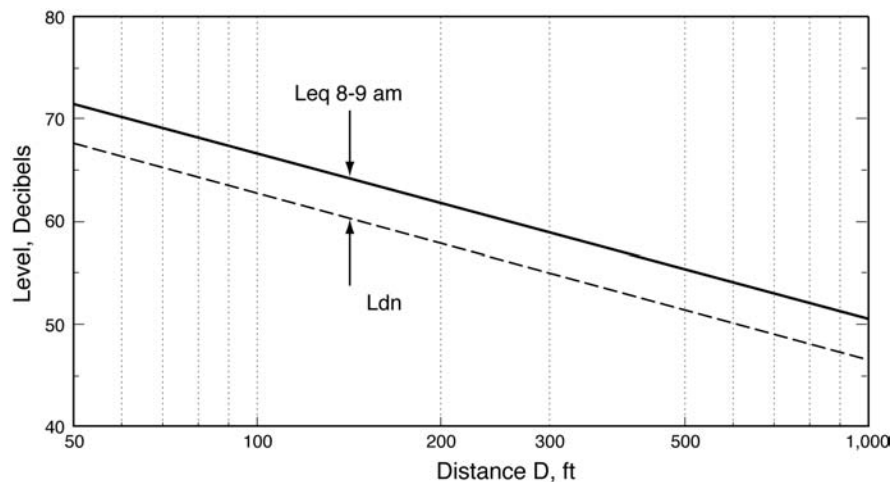


Figure 6-6. Example Exposure-vs.-Distance Curves

End of Example 6-4

6.3.2 Shielding at each Receiver

The resulting L_{eq} 's and L_{dn} 's from the previous section do not include shielding between source and receiver. Such shielding can be due to intervening noise barriers, terrain features, rows of buildings, and dense tree zones. The individual attenuations are computed using the equations from Table 6-9 for barriers and terrain, or from Table 6-10 for rows of buildings and dense tree zones.

The results are attenuation values which are applied to the previously determined project noise at receiver locations (Figure 6-4).

Table 6-9. Computation of Shielding: Barriers and Terrain	
Condition	Equation [†]
For non-absorptive transit barriers within 5 feet of the track:	$A_{barrier} = \min\{12 \text{ or } [5.3 \times \log(P) + 6.7]\}$
For absorptive transit barriers within 5 feet of the track:	$A_{barrier} = \min\{15 \text{ or } [5.3 \times \log(P) + 9.7]\}$
For all other barriers, and for protrusion of terrain above the line of sight:	$A_{barrier} = \min\left\{15 \text{ or } \left[20 \times \log\left(\frac{2.51\sqrt{P}}{\tanh[4.46\sqrt{P}]}\right) + 5\right]\right\}$
Barrier Insertion Loss	$IL_{barrier} = \max\left\{0 \text{ or } \left[A_{barrier} - 10(G_{NB} - G_B) \log\left(\frac{D}{50}\right)\right]\right\}$
D = <u>closest</u> distance between the receiver and the source, in feet P = path length difference, in feet (see figure below) G_{NB} = Ground factor G computed <i>without barrier</i> (see Figure 6-5) G_B = Ground factor G computed <i>with barrier</i> (see Figure 6-5)	
[†] The term "tanh(variable)" stands for hyperbolic tangent, available on many scientific calculators. If "tanh" is not available, then compute $E = \exp(\text{variable})$, and set $\tanh(\text{variable}) = (E - 1/E) / (E + 1/E)$, where $\exp(\text{variable})$ is the "exponential" function, also written as e^x on calculator keypads.	

Barrier Parameter P

$$P = A + B - C$$

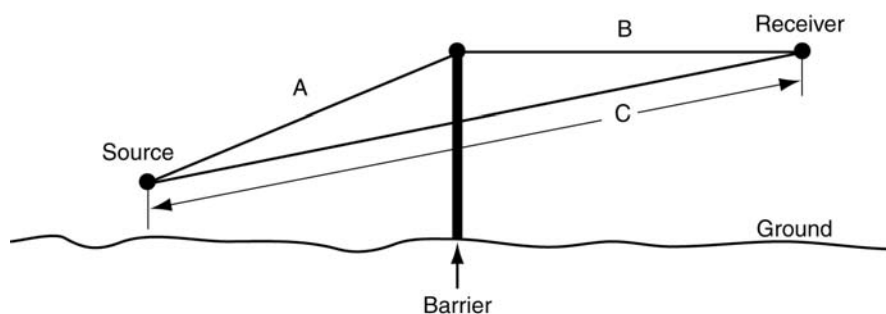
**Figure 6-7. Sketch Showing Noise Barrier Parameter “P”**

Table 6-10. Computation of Shielding: Rows of Buildings and Dense Tree Zones	
Condition	Equation
If gaps in the row of buildings constitute less than 35 percent of the length of the row:	$A_{buildings} = \min\{10 \text{ or } [1.5(R - 1) + 5]\}$
If gaps in the row of buildings constitute between 35 and 65 percent of the length of the row:	$= \min\{10 \text{ or } [1.5(R - 1) + 3]\}$
If gaps in the row of buildings constitute more than 65 percent of the length of the row:	$= 0$
Where at least 100 feet of trees intervene between source and receiver, <i>and</i> if no clear line-of-sight exists between source and receiver, <i>and</i> if the trees extend 15 feet or more above the line-of-sight:	$A_{trees} = \min\left\{10 \text{ or } \frac{W}{20}\right\}$
If above conditions do not occur:	$= 0$
R = number of rows of houses that intervene between source and receiver W = width of the tree zone along the line-of-site between source and receiver, in feet	
NET ATTENUATION	$A_{shielding} = \max\{IL_{barrier} \text{ or } A_{buildings} \text{ or } A_{trees}\}$

Example 6-5. Computation of Shielding

Intervening between the rail corridor and a receiver of interest is the following shielding:

- (1) a 15-foot high noise barrier, 40 feet from the closest track and 130 feet from the 5-foot-high receiver, and
- (2) a dense tree zone 100 feet thick. The source height $H_s = 8$ feet, per Figure 6-5.

For the barrier: $A = 40.61$ feet, $B = 130.38$ feet, $C = 170.03$ feet, and therefore $P = 0.96$ feet, according to Table 6-9.

From Figure 6-5,

$$\begin{aligned} H_{\text{eff}} (\text{no barrier}) &= 6.5 \text{ feet and} \\ H_{\text{eff}} (\text{with barrier}) &= 21.5 \text{ feet,} \end{aligned}$$

which results in

$$\begin{aligned} G_{\text{NB}} &= 0.63, \text{ and} \\ G_{\text{B}} &= 0.37. \end{aligned}$$

From Table 6-9, the resulting barrier attenuation is

$$\begin{aligned} A_{\text{barrier}} &= \min\{15 \text{ or } 20 \times \log[2.45/\tanh(4.37)] + 5\} \\ &= \min\{15 \text{ or } 12.8\} \\ &= 12.8 \text{ dB} \end{aligned}$$

and the resulting barrier Insertion Loss is

$$\begin{aligned} IL_{\text{barrier}} &= 12.8 - 10(0.63 - 0.37) \times \log(170/50) \\ &= 12.8 - 1.4 \\ &= 11.4 \text{ decibels.} \end{aligned}$$

For the tree zone: The attenuation is estimated to be 5 decibels using Table 6-10. The total shielding is the maximum of the barrier and tree zone shielding, i.e. 11.4 decibels. (Computation results should always be rounded to the nearest decibel at the end of the calculation.)

End of Example 6-5

6.3.3 Combined Propagation Characteristics

The result of combining shielding with geometrical spreading and ground effects involves subtracting the attenuation values obtained from Tables 6-9 and 6-10 from the noise exposure values obtained in Section 6.3.1 at the receiver location.

	$= (L_{dn} \text{ or } L_{eq}) \Big _{at 50 \text{ ft}} - 20 \log \left(\frac{D}{50} \right) - 10G \log \left(\frac{D}{50} \right) - A_{shielding}$	→ for stationary sources
$L_{dn} \text{ or } L_{eq}$	$= (L_{dn} \text{ or } L_{eq}) \Big _{at 50 \text{ ft}} - 10 \log \left(\frac{D}{50} \right) - 10G \log \left(\frac{D}{42} \right) - A_{shielding}$	→ for fixed-guideway rail car passbys
	$= (L_{dn} \text{ or } L_{eq}) \Big _{at 50 \text{ ft}} - 10 \log \left(\frac{D}{50} \right) - 10G \log \left(\frac{D}{29} \right) - A_{shielding}$	→ for fixed-guideway locomotive and rubber-tired vehicle passbys, highway vehicle passbys and horns

6.4 COMBINED NOISE EXPOSURE FROM ALL SOURCES

Once propagation adjustments have been made for the noise exposure from each source separately, then the sources must be combined to predict the total project noise at the receivers. Table 6-11 contains the equations for combining sources. Total noise exposure is used in Section 6.7 to assess the transit noise at each receiver of interest.

Table 6-11. Computing Total Noise Exposure	
Total L_{eq} from All Sources Combined, for the hour of interest:	$L_{eq}(total) = 10 \log \left(\sum_{all sources} 10^{L_{eq}/10} \right)$
Total L_{dn} from All sources Combined:	$L_{dn}(total) = 10 \log \left(\sum_{all sources} 10^{L_{dn}/10} \right)$

Example 6-6. Computation of Total Exposure from Combined Sources

A commuter train operation produces the following levels at a certain receiver of interest:

$$\begin{aligned} L_{eq}(8-9am) &= 72 \text{ decibels, and} \\ L_{dn} &= 68 \text{ decibels.} \end{aligned}$$

At this same receiver, a light rail system produces the following levels:

$$\begin{aligned} L_{eq}(8-9am) &= 69 \text{ decibels, and} \\ L_{dn} &= 70 \text{ decibels.} \end{aligned}$$

No other project sources affect this receiver. Using Table 6-11, the receiver's total noise exposures are therefore:

$$\begin{aligned} L_{eq}(8-9am, \text{ total}) &= 73.8 \text{ decibels, and} \\ L_{dn}(\text{total}) &= 72.1 \text{ decibels.} \end{aligned}$$

(Computation results should always be rounded to the nearest decibel at the end of the calculation.)

End of Example 6-6**6.5 MAXIMUM NOISE LEVEL FOR FIXED-GUIDEWAY SOURCES**

The assessment of noise impact in this manual utilizes either the L_{dn} or the L_{eq} descriptor. As such, in determining impact it is not necessary to determine and tabulate the maximum levels (L_{max}). However, it is often desirable to include computations of L_{max} in environmental documents, particularly for rail projects, because the noise from an individual train passby is quite distinguishable from the existing background noise. The L_{max} is also the descriptor used in vehicle specifications. Because L_{max} represents the sound level heard during a transportation vehicle passby, people can relate this metric with other noise experienced in the environment. Particularly with rail transit projects, it is representative of what people hear at any particular instant and can be measured with a sound level meter. A comparison of L_{max} with other sources can be made by referring to Figure 2-11. Thus, although L_{max} is not used in this manual as a basis for assessing noise impact, it can provide people with a more complete description of the noise effects of a proposed project and should be reported in environmental documents. Equations for computing L_{max} from SEL are given in Appendix F.

6.6 STUDY AREA CHARACTERISTICS

This section contains procedures to estimate existing noise exposure at each receiver of interest identified previously for use in assessing noise impact. Figure 6-8 shows the flow diagram for estimating ambient noise. First decide whether to measure noise exposure, to compute it from partial measurements, or to estimate it from the table provided in this chapter. Different methods may be used at different receivers along the project. Finally, make the measurements, computations or estimates of the ambient noise at each receiver of interest.

6.6.1 Deciding Whether to Measure, Compute, or Estimate

In general, it is better to measure existing noise than to compute or estimate it. Measurements are more precise than computations and estimates and therefore lead to more precise conclusions concerning noise impact. However, measurements are expensive, are often thwarted by weather, and take significant time in the field. So the choice between measurements and computations/estimates is a choice between the precision of measurements and the convenience of computations/estimates. A mixture of these is generally selected, relying on measurements where the greatest precision is needed.

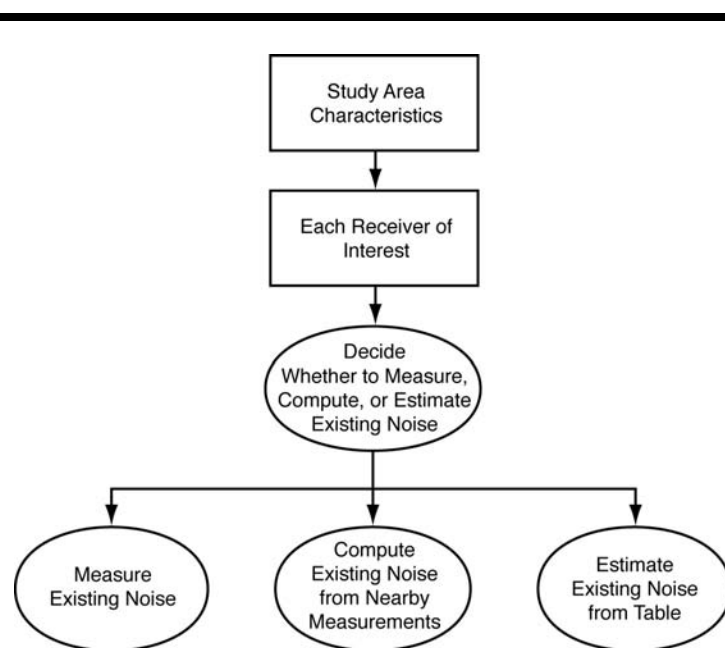


Figure 6-8. Flow Diagram for Determining Existing Noise

A penalty comes along with the convenience of computations and especially of tabular estimates. Because computations/estimates are less precise than measurements, the procedures for them (in Appendix D) are purposely conservative and consequently are inappropriate for the accuracy needed in a Detailed Noise Analysis. When more precise impact projections are desired, measurements must be chosen instead.

The combination of measurements, computations, and estimates depends partly upon the type of land use. For non-residential land uses with daytime use only, it is usually adequate to measure only one hour's ambient L_{eq} , preferably during the hour when project activity is likely to cause the greatest impact. This is relatively easy to measure. On the other hand, in

residential areas that are not near major roadways, a full day's ambient L_{dn} is usually required. The following sections describe the approaches to be taken in each case and how to combine the results to characterize the existing ambient conditions.

6.6.2 Noise Exposure Measurements

Full one-hour measurements are the most precise way to determine ambient noise exposure for non-residential receivers. For residential receivers, full 24-hour measurements are most precise. Such full-duration measurements are preferred over other options, where time and study funds allow. The following procedures apply to full-duration measurements:

- For non-residential land uses, measure a full hour's L_{eq} at the receiver of interest, on at least two non-successive weekdays (generally between noon Monday and noon Friday). Select the hour of the day when the maximum project activity is expected to occur.
- For residential land uses, measure a full 24-hours' L_{dn} at the receiver of interest, for a single weekday (generally between noon Monday and noon Friday).
- Use judgment in positioning the measurement microphone. Location of the microphone at the receiver depends upon the proposed location of the transit noise source. If, for example, a new rail line will be in front of the house, do not locate the microphone in the back yard. Figure 6-9 illustrates recommended measurement positions for various locations of the project, with respect to the house and the existing source of ambient noise.
- Undertake all measurements in accordance with good engineering practice following guidelines given in ASTM and ANSI standards.^(3,4)

6.6.3 Noise Exposure Computations from Partial Measurements

Often measurements can be made at some of the receivers of interest and then these measurements can be used to estimate noise exposure at nearby receivers. In other situations, several hourly L_{eq} 's can be measured at a receiver and then the L_{dn} computed from these. Both of these options require experience and knowledge of acoustics to select representative measurement sites.

Measurements at one receiver can be used to represent the noise environment at other sites, but only when proximity to major noise sources is similar among the sites. For example, a residential neighborhood with otherwise similar homes may have greatly varying noise environments: one part of the neighborhood may be located where the ambient noise is clearly due to highway traffic; a second part, toward the interior of the neighborhood, may have highway noise as a factor but also a significant contribution from other community noise; and a third part located deep into the residential area will have local street traffic and other community activities dominate the ambient noise. In this example, three or more measurement sites would be required to represent the varying ambient noise conditions in a single neighborhood.

Typical situations where representative measurement sites can be used to estimate noise levels at other sites occur when both share the following characteristics:

- proximity to the same major transportation noise sources, such as highways, rail lines and aircraft flight patterns;

- proximity to the same major stationary noise sources, such as power plants, industrial facilities, rail yards and airports;
- similar type and density of housing, such as single-family homes on quarter-acre lots and multi-family housing in apartment complexes.

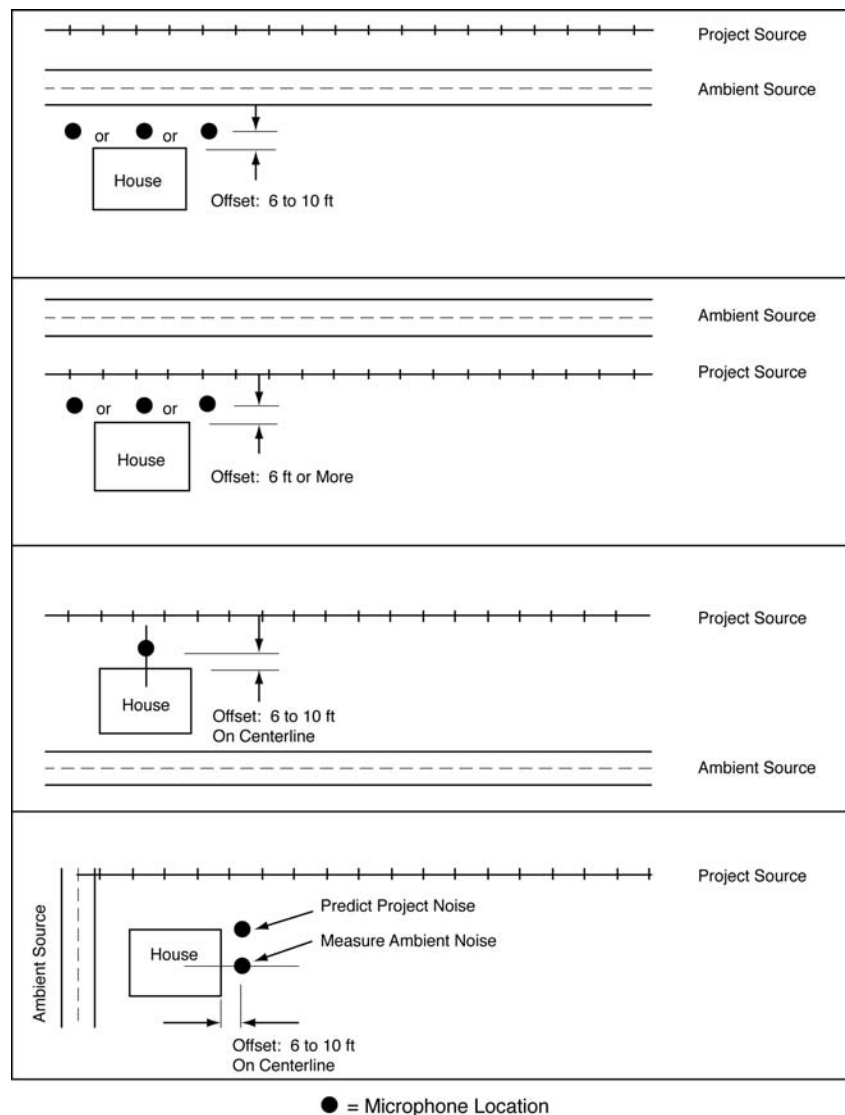


Figure 6-9. Recommended Microphone Locations for Existing Noise Measurements

Acoustical professionals are often adept at such computations from partial data and are encouraged here to use their experience and judgment in fully utilizing the measurements in their computations. Required

here is an attempt to somewhat underestimate ambient noise in the process, to account for reduced precision compared to full noise measurements.

On the other hand, people lacking the background in acoustics are encouraged to use the procedures in Appendix D to accomplish this same aim. These procedures are an attempt to systematize such computations from partial measurements. The methods in Appendix D are designed with a safety factor to underestimate ambient noise to account for reduced precision compared to full noise measurements.

6.6.4 Estimating Existing Noise Exposure

The least precise way to determine noise exposure is to estimate it from a table. This method can be used for the General Noise Assessment, but it is not recommended for a Detailed Noise Analysis. However, it can be used in the absence of better data for locations where roadways or railroads are the predominant ambient noise source. Table 5-7 presents these ambient levels. In general, the tabulated values of noise exposure are underestimates. As explained above, underestimates here are intended to compensate for the reduced precision of the estimated ambient levels compared to the options that incorporate full or partial measurements.

Notwithstanding the guidance above, there is one situation where it may be more accurate to estimate rather than measure the existing noise exposure, namely in areas near major airports where aircraft noise is dominant. Because airport noise is highly variable based on weather conditions and corresponding runway usage, it is preferable in such cases to base the existing noise exposure on published aircraft noise contours in terms of Annual Average L_{dn} .

6.7 NOISE IMPACT ASSESSMENT

This section contains procedures for the assessment of project noise impact, utilizing the ambient noise and project noise results from the previous analysis. Two assessment methods are included:

- **Rail and Bus Facilities:** This category includes all rail projects (e.g., rail rapid transit, light rail transit, commuter rail, and automated guideway transit), as well as fixed facilities such as storage and maintenance yards, passenger stations and terminals, parking facilities, substations, etc. Also included are rail transit projects built within a highway or railroad corridor. Certain bus facilities are included in this category, such as bus rapid transit (BRT) on separate roadways and bus operations on local streets and highways where the project does not include roadway construction or modification that significantly changes roadway capacity. The distinguishing feature in all these cases is that the existing noise levels generated by roadway traffic and other sources will not change as a result of the project; therefore the project noise is exclusively due to the new transit sources. For projects like these, FTA is generally the lead agency and the methodology from this manual is the appropriate approach.
- **Highway/Transit Projects:** Projects in this category involve transit as part of new highway construction or modifications to existing highways to increase carrying capacity. For these multi-

modal projects, the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) may be a joint lead agency with FTA, and the State department of transportation (DOT) would probably also be participating in the environmental impact assessment. Projects would involve traffic lanes with preferential treatment for buses or high-occupancy vehicles (HOVs). The distinguishing feature here is that the *project* noise includes a combination of highway and transit sources. Examples are: new highway construction providing general-purpose lanes as well as dedicated bus/HOV lanes and lane additions or reconfigurations on existing highways or arterials to accommodate buses/HOVs. These multi-modal projects fall into two sub-categories and the appropriate method to use for noise prediction and impact assessment depends on whether the highway noise dominates throughout day and night or the transit noise dominates during off-peak and late night hours. If sufficient evidence shows that highway noise dominates, the methods of FHWA, including the latest authorized version of the Traffic Noise Model (TNM), should be used. Otherwise both FHWA and FTA prediction procedures should be used along with both sets of impact assessment criteria since the transit mode's greatest impact will likely not occur during the worst traffic hours.

The factors to consider when deciding which sub-category is appropriate for a given project are given in the beginning of Chapter 3.

6.7.1 Assessment for Rail and Bus Facilities

For these types of projects, noise impact is assessed at each receiver of interest using the criteria for transit projects described in Chapter 3. The assessment procedure is as follows:

1. Tabulate existing ambient noise exposure (rounded to the nearest whole decibel) at all receivers of interest from earlier in the analysis. In cases where large residential buildings are exposed to noise on one side only, the receivers on that side are included in the analysis.
2. Tabulate project noise exposure at these receivers from the analytical procedures described in this chapter.
3. Determine the level of noise impact (No Impact, Moderate Impact or Severe Impact) following the procedures in Chapter 3.
4. Document the results in noise-assessment inventory tables. These tables should include the following types of information:
 - Receiver identification and location
 - Land-use description
 - Number of noise-sensitive sites represented (number of dwelling units in residences or acres of outdoor noise-sensitive land)
 - Closest distance to the project

- Existing noise exposure
- Project noise exposure
- Level of noise impact (No Impact, Moderate Impact, or Severe Impact)

These tables should provide a sum of the total number of receivers, especially numbers of dwelling units, predicted to experience Moderate Impact or Severe Impact.

5. Illustrate the areas of Moderate Impact and Severe Impact on maps or aerial photographs. Two methods of impact display are labeling and contouring. In a Detailed Analysis, the most accurate indication of impact is a label attached to each impacted building or cluster identified in the inventory table. A less precise illustration of impacted areas is a plot of project noise contours on the maps or aerial photographs, along with shaded impact areas. This is done by delineating two impact lines: one between the areas of No Impact and Moderate Impact and the second between Moderate Impact and Severe Impact. Such impact contours would be similar to those estimated in the General Assessment of Chapter 5, but with greater precision. As a cautionary note, it is difficult to position noise contours in urban areas due to shielding, terrain features and other propagation anomalies. If noise contours are used, they should be considered illustrative rather than definitive. If desired to conform with the practices of another agency, the contouring may perhaps include several contour lines of constant project noise, such as L_{dn} 65, L_{dn} 70 and L_{dn} 75.
6. Discussion of the magnitude of the impacts is an essential part of the assessment. The magnitude of noise impact is defined by the two threshold curves delineating onset of Moderate Impact and Severe Impact. Interpretation of the two impact regimes is discussed in Chapter 3.

6.7.2 Assessment for Highway/Transit Projects

For most highway/transit projects where highway noise dominates, the FHWA Noise Abatement Criteria should be used, with the exceptions noted in Chapter 3.⁽⁵⁾ In general the appropriate calculation method is the current version of FHWA's Traffic Noise Model (TNM). The TNM was first released by FHWA in April 1998 for use on Federal-aid highway projects.⁽⁶⁾ TNM is a state of the art computer program used for predicting noise impacts in the vicinity of highways. TNM Version 2.5 was released in April 2004, which includes updates to the User's Guide and Technical Manual.⁽⁷⁾

The program allows for a detailed assessment at each receiver of interest by separately calculating the noise contribution of each roadway segment. For each roadway segment, the noise from each vehicle type is computed from reference energy-mean emission levels, adjusted for:

- Vehicle volume,
- Vehicle speed,
- Grade,
- Roadway segment length, and

- Source-to-receiver distance.

Further adjustments needed to accurately model the sound propagation from source to receiver include:

- Shielding provided by rows of buildings,
- Effects of different ground types,
- Source and receiver elevations, and
- Effect of any intervening noise barriers.

The program sums the noise contributions of each vehicle type for a given roadway segment at the receiver. TNM then repeats this process for all roadway segments, summing their contributions to generate the predicted noise level at each receiver.

6.8 MITIGATION OF NOISE IMPACT

6.8.1 Noise Mitigation Measures

Where the noise impact assessment shows either Severe Impact or Moderate Impact, this section provides guidance on considering and implementing noise reduction measures. In general, mitigation options are chosen from those below, and then portions of the project noise are recomputed and reassessed to account for this mitigation. This allows an accurate prediction of the level of noise reduction. It is important to emphasize that the source levels used in this manual are typical of systems designed according to current engineering practice, but they do not include special noise control features that could be incorporated in the specifications at extra cost. This approach provides a reasonable analysis of conditions without mitigation measures. If special features that result in noise reductions are included in any of the predictions, then the Federal environmental document must include a commitment by the project sponsor to adopt such treatments before the project is approved for construction. Since cost considerations often play into decisions before committing to mitigation, this manual provides general cost information based on data presented in a Transit Cooperative Research Program (TCRP) report.⁽⁸⁾ A detailed discussion of mitigation costs is presented in Chapter 5 of the TCRP report, especially the tables included in Chapter 5.

Mitigation of noise impact from transit projects may involve treatments at the three fundamental components of the noise problem: (1) at the noise source, (2) along the source-to-receiver propagation path or (3) at the receiver. Generally, the transit property has authority to treat the source and some elements of the propagation path, but may have little or no authority to modify anything at the receiver.

A list of practical noise mitigation measures that should be considered by project sponsors is summarized in Table 6-12 and discussion of the measures follows. This table is organized according to whether the treatment applies to the source, path or receiver, and includes estimates of the acoustical effectiveness of each treatment.

6.8.2 Source Treatments

Vehicle Noise Specifications (Rail and Bus)

Among the most effective noise mitigation treatments is noise control at the outset, during the specification and design of the transit vehicle. Such source treatments apply to all transit modes. By developing and enforcing stringent but achievable noise specifications, the transit property takes a major step in controlling noise everywhere on the system. It is important to ensure that the noise levels quoted in the specifications are achievable with the application of best available technology during the development of the vehicle and reasonable in light of the noise reduction benefits and costs.

Effective enforcement includes significant penalties for non-compliance with the specifications. The noise mitigation achieved by source treatment depends on the quality of installation and maintenance. In the past, transit vehicles have been delivered that did not meet a noise specification, causing complaints from the public and requiring additional noise mitigation measures applied to the wayside.

Table 6-12. Transit Noise Mitigation Measures

Application	Mitigation Measure	Effectiveness
SOURCE	Stringent Vehicle & Equipment Noise Specifications	Varied
	Operational Restrictions	Varied
	Resilient or Damped Wheels*	For Rolling Noise on Tangent Track: 2 dB
		For Wheel Squeal on Curved Track: 10-20 dB
	Vehicle Skirts*	6-10 dB
	Undercar Absorption*	5 dB
	Spin-slide control (prevents flats)*	**
	Wheel Truing (eliminates wheel flats)*	**
	Rail Grinding (eliminates corrugations)*	**
	Turn Radii greater than 1000 ft*	(Avoids Squeal)
	Rail Lubrication on Sharp Curves*	(Reduces Squeal)
	Movable-Point Frogs (reduce rail gaps at crossovers)*	(Reduces Impact Noise)
PATH	Engine Compartment Treatments (Buses)	6-10 dB
	Sound Barriers close to Vehicles	6-15 dB
	Sound Barriers at ROW Line	3-10 dB
	Alteration of Horiz. & Vert. Alignments	Varied
	Acquisition of Buffer Zones	Varied
	Ballast on At-Grade Guideway*	3 dB
	Ballast on Aerial Guideway*	5 dB
RECEIVER	Resilient Track Support on Aerial Guideway	Varied
	Acquisition of Property Rights for Construction of Sound Barriers	5-10 dB
	Building Noise Insulation	5-20 dB
* Applies to rail projects only		
** These mitigation measures work to maintain a rail system in its as-new condition. Without incorporating them into the system, noise levels could increase up to 10 dB.		

Stationary Source Noise Specifications

Stringent but achievable noise specifications also represent an effective approach for mitigating noise impact from stationary sources associated with a transit system. Such equipment includes fixed plant equipment (for example, transformers and mechanical equipment) as well as grade-crossing signals. For example, noise impact from grade-crossing signals can be mitigated by specifying equipment that sets the level of the warning signal lower where ambient noise is lower, that minimizes the signal duration, and that minimizes signal noise in the direction of noise-sensitive receivers.

Wheel Treatments (Rail)

A major source of noise from steel-wheel/steel-rail systems is the wheel/rail interaction which has three components: roar, impact and squeal. Roar is the rolling noise caused by small-scale roughness on the wheel tread and rail running surface. Impacts are caused by discontinuities in the running surface of the rail or by a flat spot on the wheels. Squeal occurs when a steel-wheel tread or its flange rubs across the rail, setting up resonant vibrations in the wheel which cause it to radiate a screeching sound. Various wheel designs and other mitigation measures exist to reduce the noise from each of these three mechanisms.

- **Resilient wheels** serve to reduce rolling noise, but only slightly. A typical reduction is 2 decibels on tangent track. This treatment is more effective in eliminating wheel squeal on tight turns; reductions of 10 to 20 decibels for high-frequency squeal noise are typical. The costs for resilient wheels are approximately \$3000 per wheel, in comparison to about \$700 for standard steel wheels.
- **Damped wheels**, like resilient wheels, serve to reduce rolling noise, but only slightly. A typical reduction is 2 decibels on tangent track. This treatment involves attaching vibration absorbers to standard steel wheels. Damping is effective in eliminating wheel squeal on tight turns; reductions of 5 to 15 decibels for high-frequency squeal noise are typical. The costs for damped wheels add approximately \$500 to \$1000 to the normal \$700 for each steel wheel.
- **Spin-slide control systems**, similar to anti-locking brake systems (ABS) on automobiles, reduce the incidence of wheel flats, a major contributor of impact noise. Trains with smooth wheel treads can be up to 20 decibels quieter than those with wheel flats. To be effective, the anti-locking feature should be in operation during all braking phases, including emergency braking. Wheel flats are more likely to occur during emergency braking than during dynamic braking. The cost of slip-slide control may be incorporated in the new vehicle costs, but may be between \$5,000 and \$10,000 per vehicle.
- **Maintenance** of wheels by truing eliminates wheel flats from the treads and restores the wheel profile. As discussed above, wheel flats are a major source of impact noise. A good maintenance program includes the installation of equipment to detect and correct wheel flats on a continuing basis. Costs vary according to transit property practices, but the TCRP report identifies a cost for truing wheels at \$60 per wheelset.

Vehicle Treatments (Rail and Bus)

Vehicle noise mitigation measures are applied to the various mechanical systems associated with propulsion, ventilation and passenger comfort.

- **Propulsion systems** of transit vehicles include diesel engines, electric motors and diesel-electric combinations. Noise from the propulsion system depends on the type of unit and how much noise mitigation is built into the design. Mufflers on diesel engines are generally required to meet noise specifications; however, mufflers are generally practical only on buses, not on locomotives. Control of noise from engine casings may require shielding the engine by body panels without louvers, dictating other means of cooling and ventilation.
- **Ventilation** requirements for vehicle systems are related to the noise generated by a vehicle. Fan noise often remains a major noise source after other mitigation measures have been instituted because of the need to have direct access to cooling air. This applies to heat exchangers for electric traction motors, diesel engines and air-conditioning systems. Fan-quieting can be accomplished by installation of one of several new designs of quiet, efficient fans. Forced-air cooling on electric traction motors can be quieter than self-cooled motors at operating speeds. Placement of fans on the vehicle can make a significant difference in the noise radiated to the wayside or to patrons on the station platforms.
- The **vehicle body** design can provide shielding and absorption of the noise generated by the vehicle components. Acoustical absorption under the car has been demonstrated to provide up to 5 decibels of mitigation for wheel/rail noise and propulsion-system noise on rapid transit trains. Similarly, vehicle skirts over the wheels can provide more than 5 decibels of mitigation. By carrying their own noise barriers, vehicles with these features can provide cost-effective noise reduction.

Use of Locomotive Horns at Grade Crossings

In cases where commuter rail operations share tracks or rights-of-way with freight or intercity passenger trains that are part of the “general railroad system,” the safety rules of the Federal Railroad Administration (FRA) apply. In particular, the rule for the use of locomotive horns at highway-rail grade crossings is in effect.⁽⁹⁾ This rule requires generally that horns be sounded at public road crossings, although some exceptions are allowed in carefully defined circumstances. One exception enables the establishment of a “quiet zone” in which certain supplemental safety measures (SSM’s) are used in place of the locomotive horn to provide an equivalent level of safety at grade crossings. By adopting an approved SSM at each public grade crossing, a quiet zone of at least a half-mile long can be established. These measures are in addition to the standard safety devices required at most public grade crossings (e.g., stop signs, reflectorized crossbucks, flashing lights with gates that do not completely block travel over the tracks). Below are four SSM’s which have been predetermined by the FRA to fully compensate for the lack of a locomotive horn:

- Temporary closure of a public highway-rail grade crossing. This measure requires closure of the grade crossing one period for each 24 hours, and must be closed the same time each day.

- Four-quadrant gate system. This measure involves the installation of at least one gate for each direction of traffic to fully block vehicles from entering the crossing.
- Gates with medians or channelization devices. This measure keeps traffic in the proper travel lanes as it approaches the crossing. This denies the driver the option of circumventing the gates by traveling in the opposing lane.
- One-way street with gates. This measure consists of one-way streets with gates installed so that all approaching travel lanes are completely blocked.

In addition to the pre-approved SSM's, the FRA rule also identifies a range of other measures that may be used in establishing a quiet zone. These could be modified SSM's or non-engineering types of measures, such as increased monitoring by law enforcement for grade crossing violations or instituting public education and awareness programs that emphasize the risks associated with grade crossings and applicable requirements. These alternative safety measures (ASMs) require approval by FRA based on a demonstration that public safety would not be compromised by eliminating the horn.

Locomotive horns are quite loud, and horn noise is often the major contributor in projections of adverse noise impact in the community from proposed commuter rail projects. Since sound barriers are not feasible at highway-rail grade crossings, the establishment of quiet zones may be an attractive option. The lead agency in designating a quiet zone is the local public authority responsible for traffic control and law enforcement on the roads crossing the tracks. In order to satisfy the FRA regulatory requirements, the public transit agency must work closely with this agency while also coordinating with any freight or passenger railroad operator sharing the right-of-way. Depending on the circumstances, establishment of a quiet zone would probably not be completed in the time frame of the environmental review process. However, as with other types of mitigation, the final environmental document should discuss the main considerations in adopting the quiet zone, for example, engineering feasibility, receptiveness of the local public authority, consultation with the railroad, preliminary cost estimates, etc., and show evidence of the planning and interagency coordination that has occurred to date. If a quiet zone will be relied on as a mitigation measure, the final environmental document should provide reasonable assurance that any remaining issues can and will be resolved.

The cost of establishing a quiet zone varies considerably, depending on the number of intersections that must be treated and the specific SSM's, ASM's, or combination of measures that are used. The FRA gives a cost estimate of \$15,000 per crossing for installing two 100-foot-long non-traversable medians that prevent motorists from driving around closed gates. A typical installation of a four-quadrant gate system is in the range of \$175,000-\$300,000 per crossing. Who pays for the installation of modifications can become a major consideration in a decision to pursue a quiet zone designation, especially in cases where noise from preexisting railroad operations has been a sore point in the community. In cases where a quiet zone would mitigate a Severe Impact situation brought about by the proposed transit project, the costs would be borne by the local transit agency and FTA in the same proportion as the overall cost-sharing for the project.

Guideway Support (Bus and Rail)

The smoothness of the running surface is critical in the mitigation of noise from a moving vehicle. Smooth roadways for buses and smooth rail running surfaces for rail systems are required. In either case, roughness of the street, roadway and rail surfaces can be eliminated by resurfacing roads or grinding rails, thereby reducing noise levels by up to 10 decibels. Bridge expansion joints are also a source of noise for rubber-tire vehicles. This source of noise can be reduced by placing expansion joints on an angle or by specifying the serrated type rather than joints with right-angle edges.

In the case of steel-wheel/steel-rail systems with non-steerable trucks and sharp turns, squeal can be mitigated by installation of rail lubricators. Squeal in such systems can usually be eliminated altogether by designing all turn radii to be greater than 1000 feet, or 100 times the truck wheelbase, whichever is less.

Operational Restrictions (Rail and Bus)

Two changes in operations that can mitigate noise are the lowering of speed and the reduction of nighttime (10 pm to 7 am) operations. Because noise from most transit vehicles depends on speed, a reduction of speed results in lower noise levels. The effect can be considerable. For example, the speed dependency of steel-wheel/steel-rail systems for L_{eq} and L_{dn} (see Table 6-4) results in a 6 dB reduction for a halving of the speed. Complete elimination of nighttime operations has a strong effect on reducing the L_{dn} , because nighttime noise is increased by 10 decibels when calculating L_{dn} . Restrictions on operations are usually not feasible because of service demands, and FTA does not pursue restrictions on operations as a noise reduction measure. However, if early morning idling can be curtailed to the minimum necessary, this can have a measurable effect on L_{dn} .

Other operational restrictions that can reduce noise impact for light rail and commuter rail systems include minimizing or eliminating horn blowing and other types of warning signals at grade crossings. While these mitigation options are limited by safety considerations, they can be effective in the right circumstances and they are discussed elsewhere in this section (e.g., wayside horns).

6.8.3 Path Treatments**Sound Barriers**

Sound barriers are effective in mitigating noise when they break the line-of-sight between source and receiver. The mechanism of sound shielding is described in Chapter 2. The necessary height of a barrier depends on such factors as the source height and the distance from the source to the barrier. For example, if a barrier is located very close to a rapid transit train, it need only be 3 to 4 feet above the top of rail to be effective. Barriers close to vehicles can provide noise reductions of 6 to 10 decibels. For barriers further away, such as on the right-of-way line or for trains on the far track, the height must be increased to provide equivalent effectiveness. Otherwise, the effectiveness can drop to 5 decibels or less, even if the barrier breaks the line-of-sight. Where the barrier is very close to the transit vehicle or where the vehicles travel between sets of parallel barriers, barrier effectiveness can be increased by as much as 5 decibels by applying sound-absorbing material to the inner surface of the barrier.

Similarly, the length of the barrier wall is important to its effectiveness. The barrier must be long enough to screen out a moving train along most of its visible path. This is necessary so that train noise from beyond the ends of the barrier will not severely compromise noise-barrier performance at sensitive locations.

Noise barriers can be made of any outdoor weather-resistant solid material that meets a minimum sound transmission loss requirement. The sound requirements are not particularly strict; they can be met by many commonly available materials, such as 16-gauge steel, 1-inch thick plywood, and any reasonable thickness of concrete. The normal minimum requirement is a surface density of 4 pounds per square foot. To hold up under wind loads, structural requirements are more stringent. Achieving the maximum possible noise reduction requires careful sealing of gaps between barrier panels and between the barrier and the ground or elevated guideway deck.

Costs for noise barriers, based on highway installations, range from \$25 to \$35 per square foot of installed noise barrier at-grade, not counting design and inspection costs⁽¹⁰⁾. Installation on aerial structure may be a factor of two greater, especially if the structure has to be strengthened to accommodate the added weight and wind load.

Location of a transit alignment in cut, as part of grade separation, can accomplish the same result as installation of a noise barrier at-grade or on aerial structure. The walls of the cut serve the same function as barrier walls in breaking the line-of-sight between source and receiver.

Wayside Horns

The sounding of a locomotive horn as the train approaches an at-grade intersection produces a very wide noise “footprint” in the community. Using wayside horns at the intersection instead of the locomotive horn has been shown to substantially reduce the noise footprint without compromising safety at the grade crossing. A wayside horn does not need to be as loud as a locomotive horn, but the real advantage is the focusing of the warning sound only on the area where it is needed. These are pole-mounted horns used in conjunction with flashing lights and gates at the intersection, with a separate horn oriented toward each direction of oncoming vehicle traffic. Field tests have shown that noise levels in nearby residential and business areas can be reduced significantly with wayside horns, depending on the location with respect to the grade crossing.

A plan to use wayside horns in place of the locomotive horn at public grade crossings must be coordinated with several public and private entities, notably the local agency having responsibility for traffic control and law enforcement on the road crossings, the state agency responsible for railroad safety, any railroads that share the right-of-way, and FRA. Public notification must also be given.

Preliminary cost information from testing programs indicates a wayside horn system at a railroad/highway grade crossing costs approximately \$50,000.

Noise Buffers

Because noise levels attenuate with distance, one noise mitigation measure is to increase the distance between noise sources and the closest sensitive receivers. This can be accomplished by locating alignments away from sensitive sites. Acquisition of land or purchasing easements for noise buffer zones is an option that may be considered if impacts due to the project are severe enough.

Ground Absorption

Propagation of noise over ground is affected by whether the ground surface is absorptive or reflective. Noise from vehicles on the surface is strongly affected by the character of the ground in the immediate vicinity of the vehicle. Roads and streets for buses are hard and reflective, but the ground at the side of a road has a significant effect on the propagation of noise to greater distance. This effect is described in Chapter 2 and taken into account in the computations of this chapter. Guideways for rail systems can be either reflective or absorptive, depending on whether they are concrete or ballast. Ballast on a guideway can reduce train noise 3 decibels at-grade and up to 5 decibels on aerial structure.

6.8.4 Receiver Treatments**Sound Barriers**

In certain cases it may be possible to acquire limited property rights for the construction of sound barriers at the receiver. As discussed above, barriers need to break the line-of-sight between the noise source and the receiver to be effective and are most effective when they are closest to either the source or the receiver. Computational procedures for estimating barrier effectiveness are given earlier in this chapter.

Building Insulation

In cases where sound barriers are not feasible, such as multi-story buildings, buildings very close to the rights-of-way, or grade crossings, the only practical noise mitigation measure may be to provide sound insulation for the buildings. Effective treatments include caulking and sealing gaps in the building façade, and installation of new doors and windows that are specially designed to meet acoustical transmission-loss requirements. Exterior doors facing the noise source should be replaced with well-gasketed, solid-core wood doors and well-gasketed storm doors. Acoustical windows are usually made of multiple layers of glass with air spaces between to provide noise reduction. Acoustical performance ratings are published in terms of “Sound Transmission Class” (STC) for these special windows. A minimum STC rating of 39 should be used on any window exposed to the noise source. These treatments are beneficial for heat insulation as well as for sound insulation. As an added consideration for costs, however, acoustical windows are usually non-operable so that central ventilation or air conditioning is needed.

Additional building sound insulation, if needed, can be provided by sealing vents and ventilation openings and relocating them to a side of the building away from the noise source. In cases where low frequency noise from diesel locomotives is the problem, it may be necessary to increase the mass of the building façade of wood frame houses by adding a layer of sheathing to the exterior walls.

Criteria for Interior Noise Levels. Depending on the quality of the original building façade, especially windows and doors, sound insulation treatments can improve the noise reductions from transit noise by 5 to 20 dBA. In order to be considered cost-effective, a treatment should provide a minimum of 5 dBA reduction in the interior of the building and provide an interior noise level of 65 dBA or less from transit sources. In homes where noise impact from train horns is identified, the sound insulation should provide sufficient noise reduction such that horn noise inside the building is 70 dBA or less.

Examples of residential sound insulation for rail or highway projects are limited. However, much practical experience with sound insulation of buildings has been gained through grants for noise mitigation to local airport authorities by the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA). Based on FAA experience, a typical single-family home can be fitted for sound insulation for costs ranging from \$25,000 to \$50,000.

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7. BASIC GROUND-BORNE VIBRATION CONCEPTS

Ground-borne vibration can be a serious concern for nearby neighbors of a transit system route or maintenance facility, causing buildings to shake and rumbling sounds to be heard. In contrast to airborne noise, ground-borne vibration is not a common environmental problem. It is unusual for vibration from sources such as buses and trucks to be perceptible, even in locations close to major roads. Some common sources of ground-borne vibration are trains, buses on rough roads, and construction activities such as blasting, pile-driving and operating heavy earth-moving equipment.

The effects of ground-borne vibration include feelable movement of the building floors, rattling of windows, shaking of items on shelves or hanging on walls, and rumbling sounds. In extreme cases, the vibration can cause damage to buildings. Building damage is not a factor for normal transportation projects, with the occasional exception of blasting and pile-driving during construction. Annoyance from vibration often occurs when the vibration exceeds the threshold of perception by only a small margin. A vibration level that causes annoyance will be well below the damage threshold for normal buildings.

The basic concepts of ground-borne vibration are illustrated for a rail system in Figure 7-1. The train wheels rolling on the rails create vibration energy that is transmitted through the track support system into the transit structure. The amount of energy that is transmitted into the transit structure is strongly dependent on factors such as how smooth the wheels and rails are and the resonance frequencies of the vehicle suspension system and the track support system. These systems, like all mechanical systems, have resonances which result in increased vibration response at certain frequencies, called natural frequencies.

The vibration of the transit structure excites the adjacent ground, creating vibration waves that propagate through the various soil and rock strata to the foundations of nearby buildings. The vibration propagates from the foundation throughout the remainder of the building structure. The maximum vibration amplitudes of the floors and walls of a building often will be at the resonance frequencies of various components of the building.

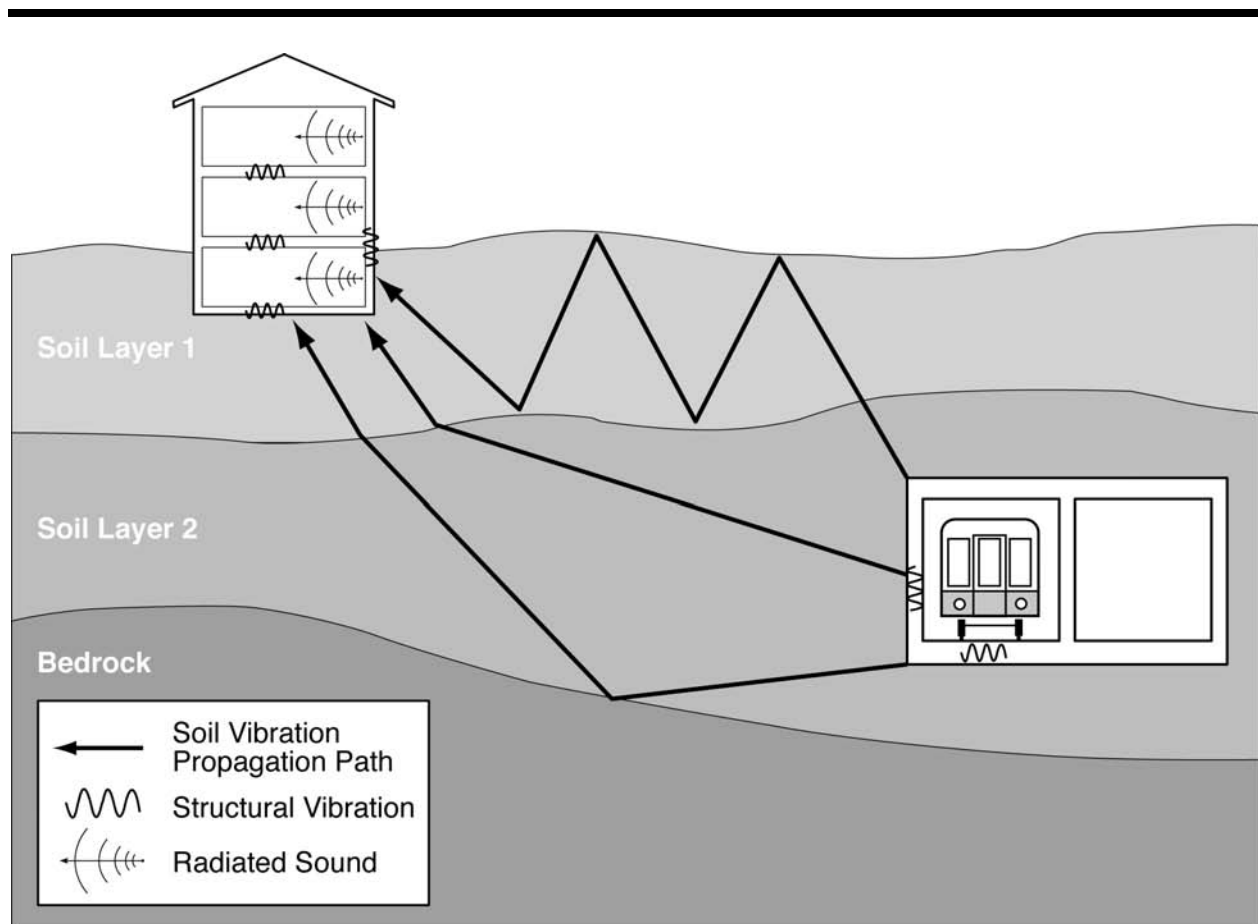


Figure 7-1. Propagation of Ground-Borne Vibration into Buildings

The vibration of floors and walls may cause perceptible vibration, rattling of items such as windows or dishes on shelves, or a rumble noise. The rumble is the noise radiated from the motion of the room surfaces. In essence, the room surfaces act like a giant loudspeaker causing what is called ground-borne noise.

Ground-borne vibration is almost never annoying to people who are outdoors. Although the motion of the ground may be perceived, without the effects associated with the shaking of a building, the motion does not provoke the same adverse human reaction. In addition, the rumble noise that usually accompanies the building vibration is perceptible only inside buildings.

7.1 DESCRIPTORS OF GROUND-BORNE VIBRATION AND NOISE

7.1.1 Vibratory Motion

Vibration is an oscillatory motion which can be described in terms of the displacement, velocity, or acceleration. Because the motion is oscillatory, there is no net movement of the vibration element and the average of any of the motion descriptors is zero. Displacement is the easiest descriptor to understand. For a vibrating floor, the displacement is simply the distance that a point on the floor moves away from its static position. The velocity represents the instantaneous speed of the floor movement and acceleration is the rate of change of the speed.

Although displacement is easier to understand than velocity or acceleration, it is rarely used for describing ground-borne vibration. Most transducers used for measuring ground-borne vibration use either velocity or acceleration. Furthermore, the response of humans, buildings, and equipment to vibration is more accurately described using velocity or acceleration.

7.1.2 Amplitude Descriptors

Vibration consists of rapidly fluctuating motions with an average motion of zero. Several descriptors can be used to quantify vibration amplitude, three of which are shown in Figure 7-2. The raw signal is the lighter-weight curve in the top graph. This curve shows the instantaneous vibration velocity which fluctuates positive and negative about the zero point. The peak particle velocity (PPV) is defined as the maximum instantaneous positive or negative peak of the vibration signal. PPV is often used in monitoring of blasting vibration since it is related to the stresses that are experienced by buildings.

Although peak particle velocity is appropriate for evaluating the potential of building damage, it is not suitable for evaluating human response. It takes some time for the human body to respond to vibration signals. In a sense, the human body responds to an average vibration amplitude. Because the net average of a vibration signal is zero, the root mean square (rms) amplitude is used to describe the "smoothed" vibration amplitude. The root mean square of a signal is the square root of the average of the squared amplitude of the signal. The average is typically calculated over a one-second period. The rms amplitude is shown superimposed

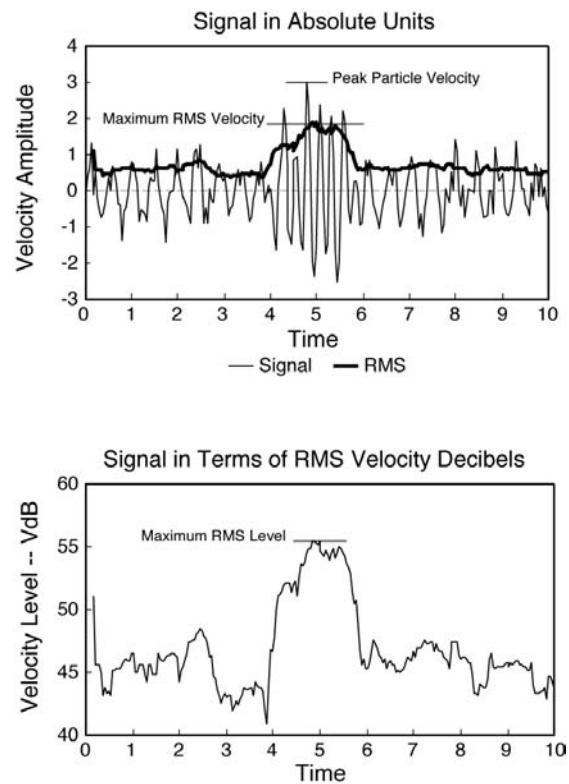


Figure 7-2. Different Methods of Describing a Vibration Signal

on the vibration signal in Figure 7-2. The rms amplitude is always less than the PPV* and is always positive.

The PPV and rms velocity are normally described in inches per second in the USA and meters per second in the rest of the world. Although it is not universally accepted, decibel notation is in common use for vibration.

Decibel notation acts to compress the range of numbers required to describe vibration. The bottom graph in Figure 7-2 shows the rms curve of the top graph expressed in decibels. Vibration velocity level in decibels is defined as:

$$L_v = 20 \times \log_{10} \left(\frac{v}{v_{ref}} \right)$$

where "L_v" is the velocity level in decibels, "v" is the rms velocity amplitude, and "v_{ref}" is the reference velocity amplitude. A reference must always be specified whenever a quantity is expressed in terms of decibels. The accepted reference quantities for vibration velocity are 1x10⁻⁶ inches/second in the USA and either 1x10⁻⁸ meters/second or 5x10⁻⁸ meters/second in the rest of the world. Because of the variations in the reference quantities, it is important to be clear about what reference quantity is being used whenever velocity levels are specified. *All vibration levels in this manual are referenced to 1x10⁻⁶ in./sec.* Although not a universally accepted notation, the abbreviation "VdB" is used in this document for vibration decibels to reduce the potential for confusion with sound decibels.

7.1.3 Ground-Borne Noise

As discussed above, the rumbling sound caused by the vibration of room surfaces is called ground-borne noise. The annoyance potential of ground-borne noise is usually characterized with the A-weighted sound level. Although the A-weighted level is almost the only metric used to characterize community noise, there are potential problems when characterizing low-frequency noise using A-weighting. This is because of the non-linearity of human hearing which causes sounds dominated by low-frequency components to seem louder than broadband sounds that have the same A-weighted level. The result is that ground-borne noise with a level of 40 dBA sounds louder than 40 dBA broadband noise. This is accounted for by setting the limits for ground-borne noise lower than would be the case for broadband noise.

*The ratio of PPV to maximum rms amplitude is defined as the **crest factor** for the signal. The crest factor is always greater than 1.71, although a crest factor of 8 or more is not unusual for impulsive signals. For ground-borne vibration from trains, the crest factor is usually 4 to 5.

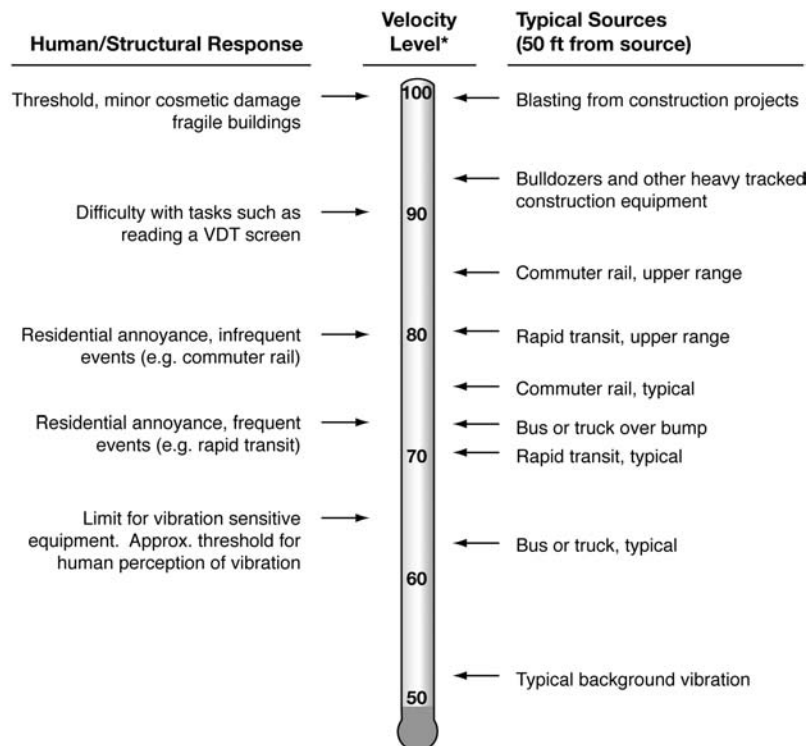
7.2 HUMAN PERCEPTION OF GROUND-BORNE VIBRATION AND NOISE

This section gives some general background on human response to different levels of building vibration, laying the groundwork for the criteria for ground-borne vibration and noise that are presented in Chapter 8.

7.2.1 Typical Levels of Ground-Borne Vibration and Noise

In contrast to airborne noise, ground-borne vibration is not a phenomenon that most people experience every day. The background vibration velocity level in residential areas is usually 50 VdB or lower, well below the threshold of perception for humans which is around 65 VdB. Most perceptible indoor vibration is caused by sources within buildings such as operation of mechanical equipment, movement of people or slamming of doors. Typical outdoor sources of perceptible ground-borne vibration are construction equipment, steel-wheeled trains, and traffic on rough roads. If the roadway is smooth, the vibration from traffic is rarely perceptible.

Figure 7-3 illustrates common vibration sources and the human and structural response to ground-borne vibration. The range of interest is from approximately 50 VdB to 100 VdB. Background vibration is usually well below the threshold of human perception and is of concern only when the vibration affects very sensitive manufacturing or research equipment. Electron microscopes and high-resolution lithography equipment are typical of equipment that is highly sensitive to vibration.



* RMS Vibration Velocity Level in VdB relative to 10^{-6} inches/second

Figure 7-3. Typical Levels of Ground-Borne Vibration

Although the perceptibility threshold is about 65 VdB, human response to vibration is not usually significant unless the vibration exceeds 70 VdB. Rapid transit or light rail systems typically generate vibration levels of 70 VdB or more near their tracks. On the other hand, buses and trucks rarely create vibration that exceeds 70 VdB unless there are bumps in the road. Because of the heavy locomotives on diesel commuter rail systems, the vibration levels average about 5 to 10 decibels higher than rail transit vehicles. If there is unusually rough road or track, wheel flats, geologic conditions that promote efficient propagation of vibration, or vehicles with very stiff suspension systems, the vibration levels from any source can be 10 decibels higher than typical. Hence, at 50 feet, the upper range for rapid transit vibration is around 80 VdB and the high range for commuter rail vibration is 85 VdB. If the vibration level in a residence reaches 85 VdB, most people will be strongly annoyed by the vibration.

The relationship between ground-borne vibration and ground-borne noise depends on the frequency content of the vibration and the acoustical absorption of the receiving room. The more acoustical absorption in the room, the lower will be the noise level. For a room with average acoustical absorption, the unweighted sound pressure level is approximately equal to the average vibration velocity level of the room surfaces.* Hence, the A-weighted level of ground-borne noise can be estimated by applying A-weighting to the vibration velocity spectrum. Since the A-weighting at 31.5 Hz is -39.4 dB, if the vibration spectrum peaks at 30 Hz, the A-weighted sound level will be approximately 40 decibels lower than the velocity level. Correspondingly, if the vibration spectrum peaks at 60 Hz, the A-weighted sound level will be about 25 decibels lower than the velocity level.

7.2.2 Quantifying Human Response to Ground-Borne Vibration and Noise

One of the major problems in developing suitable criteria for ground-borne vibration is that there has been relatively little research into human response to vibration, in particular, human annoyance with building vibration. The American National Standards Institute (ANSI) developed criteria for evaluation of human exposure to vibration in buildings in 1983⁽¹⁾ and the International Organization for Standardization (ISO) adopted similar criteria in 1989⁽²⁾ and revised them in 2003⁽³⁾. The 2003 version of ISO 2361-2 acknowledges that “human response to vibration in buildings is very complex.” It further indicates that the degree of annoyance can not always be explained by the magnitude of the vibration alone. In some cases the complaints are associated with measured vibration that is lower than the perception threshold. Other phenomena such as ground-borne noise, rattling, visual effects such as movement of hanging objects, and time of day (e.g., late at night) all play some role in the response of individuals. To understand and evaluate human response, which is often measured by complaints, all of these related effects need to be considered. The available data documenting real world experience with these phenomena is still relatively sparse. Experience with U.S. rapid transit projects represents a good foundation for developing suitable limits for residential exposure to ground-borne vibration and noise from transit operations.

*The sound level approximately equals the average vibration velocity level *only* when the velocity level is referenced to 1 micro-inch/second. When velocity level is expressed using the international standard of 1×10^{-8} m/sec, the sound level is approximately 8 decibels lower than the average velocity level.

Figure 7-4 illustrates the relationship between the vibration velocity level measured in 22 homes and the general response of the occupants to the vibration. The data shown were assembled from measurements performed for several transit systems along with subjective ratings by the researchers and residents. These data were previously published in the "State-of-the-Art Review of Ground-borne Noise and Vibration."⁽⁴⁾ Both the occupants and the people who performed the measurements agreed that floor vibration in the "Distinctly Perceptible" category was unacceptable for a residence. The data in Figure 7-4 indicate that residential vibration exceeding 75 VdB is unacceptable for a repetitive vibration source such as rapid transit trains that pass every 5 to 15 minutes. Also shown in Figure 7-4 is a curve showing the percent of people annoyed by vibration from high-speed trains in Japan.⁽⁵⁾ The scale for the percent annoyed is on the right-hand axis of the graph. The results of the Japanese study confirm the conclusion that at a vibration velocity level of 75 to 80 VdB, many people will find the vibration annoying.

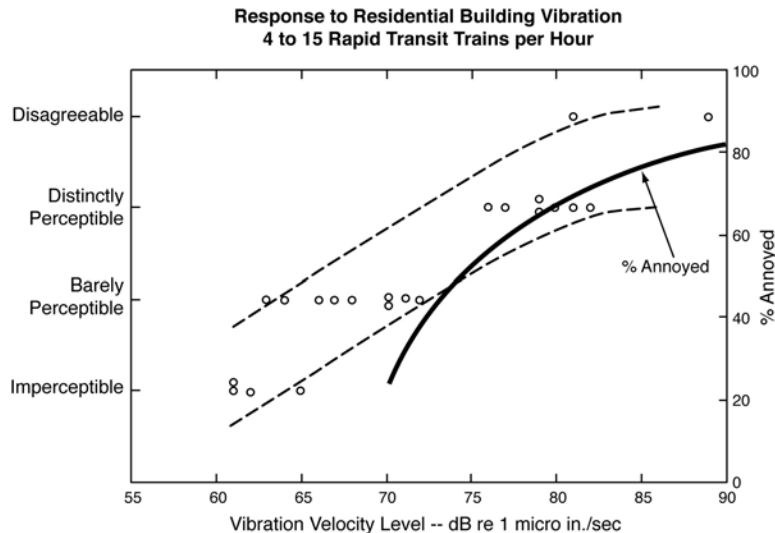


Figure 7-4. Response to Transit-induced Residential Vibration

Table 7-1 describes the human response to different levels of ground-borne noise and vibration. The first column is the vibration velocity level, and the next two columns are for the corresponding noise level assuming that the vibration spectrum peaks at 30 Hz or 60 Hz. As discussed above, the A-weighted noise level will be approximately 40 dB less than the vibration velocity level if the spectrum peak is around 30 Hz, and 25 dB lower if the spectrum peak is around 60 Hz. Table 7-1 illustrates that achieving either the acceptable vibration or acceptable noise levels does not guarantee that the other will be acceptable. For example, the noise caused by vibrating structural components may be very annoying even though the vibration cannot be felt. Alternatively, a low-frequency vibration could be annoying while the ground-borne noise level it generates is acceptable.

Table 7-1. Human Response to Different Levels of Ground-Borne Noise and Vibration			
Vib. Velocity Level	Noise Level		Human Response
	Low Freq1	Mid Freq2	
65 VdB	25 dBA	40 dBA	Approximate threshold of perception for many humans. Low-frequency sound usually inaudible, mid-frequency sound excessive for quiet sleeping areas.
75 VdB	35 dBA	50 dBA	Approximate dividing line between barely perceptible and distinctly perceptible. Many people find transit vibration at this level annoying. Low-frequency noise acceptable for sleeping areas, mid-frequency noise annoying in most quiet occupied areas.
85 VdB	45 dBA	60 dBA	Vibration acceptable only if there are an infrequent number of events per day. Low-frequency noise annoying for sleeping areas, mid-frequency noise annoying even for infrequent events with institutional land uses such as schools and churches.
Notes:			
1. Approximate noise level when vibration spectrum peak is near 30 Hz.			
2. Approximate noise level when vibration spectrum peak is near 60 Hz.			

7.3 GROUND-BORNE VIBRATION FOR DIFFERENT TRANSIT MODES

This section provides a brief discussion of typical problems with ground-borne vibration and noise for different modes of transit.

- Steel-Wheel Urban Rail Transit:** This category includes both heavy rail transit and light rail transit. Heavy rail is generally defined as electrified rapid transit trains with dedicated guideway, and light rail as electrified transit trains that do not require dedicated guideway. The ground-borne vibration characteristics of heavy and light rail vehicles are very similar since they have similar suspension systems and axle loads. Most of the studies of ground-borne vibration in this country have focused on urban rail transit. Problems with ground-borne vibration and noise are common when there is less than 50 feet between a subway structure and building foundations. Whether the problem will be perceptible vibration or audible noise is strongly dependent on local geology and the structural details of the building. Complaints about ground-borne vibration from surface track are more common than complaints about ground-borne noise. A significant percentage of complaints about both ground-borne vibration and noise can be attributed to the proximity of special trackwork, rough or corrugated track, or wheel flats.

- **Commuter and Intercity Passenger Trains:** This category includes passenger trains powered by either diesel or electric locomotives. In terms of vibration effects at a single location, the major difference between commuter and intercity passenger trains is that the latter are on a less frequent schedule. Both often share track with freight trains, which have quite different vibration characteristics as discussed below. The locomotives usually create the highest vibration levels. There is the potential of vibration-related problems anytime that new commuter or intercity rail passenger service is introduced in an urban or suburban area.
- **High-Speed Passenger Trains:** High-speed passenger trains have the potential of creating high levels of ground-borne vibration. Ground-borne vibration should be anticipated as one of the major environmental impacts of any high-speed train located in an urban or suburban area. The Amtrak trains on the Northeast Corridor between Boston and Washington, D.C., which attain moderate to high speeds in some sections with improved track, fit into this category.
- **Freight Trains:** Local and long-distance freight trains are similar in that they both are diesel-powered and have the same types of cars. They differ in their overall length, number and size of locomotives, and number of heavily loaded cars. Locomotives and rail cars with wheel flats are the sources of the highest vibration levels. Because locomotive suspensions are similar, the maximum vibration levels of local and long-distance freights are similar. It is not uncommon for freight trains to be the source of intrusive ground-borne vibration. Most railroad tracks used for freight lines were in existence for many years before the affected residential areas were developed. Vibration from freight trains can be a consideration for FTA-assisted projects when a new transit line will share an existing freight train right-of-way. Relocating the freight tracks within the right-of-way to make room for the transit tracks must be considered a direct impact of the transit system which must be evaluated as part of the proposed project. However, vibration mitigation is very difficult to implement on tracks where trains with heavy axle loads will be operating.
- **Automated Guideway Transit Systems (AGT):** This transit mode encompasses a wide range of transportation vehicles providing local circulation in downtown areas, airports and theme parks. In general, ground-borne vibration can be expected to be generated by steel-wheel/steel-rail systems even when limited in size. Because AGT systems normally operate at low speeds, have lightweight vehicles, and rarely operate in vibration-sensitive areas, ground-borne vibration problems are very rare.
- **Bus Projects:** Because the rubber tires and suspension systems of buses provide vibration isolation, it is unusual for buses to cause ground-borne noise or vibration problems. When buses cause effects such as rattling of windows, the source is almost always airborne noise. Most problems with bus-related vibration can be directly related to a pothole, bump, expansion joint, or other discontinuity in the road surface. Smoothing the bump or filling the pothole will usually solve the problem. Problems are likely when buses will be operating inside buildings. Intrusive building vibration can be caused by sudden loading of a building slab by a heavy moving vehicle or by vehicles running over lane divider bumps. A bus transfer station with commercial office space in the same building may have annoying vibration within the office space caused by bus operations.

7.4 FACTORS THAT INFLUENCE GROUND-BORNE VIBRATION AND NOISE

One of the major problems in developing accurate estimates of ground-borne vibration is the large number of factors that can influence the levels at the receiver position. This section gives a general appreciation of which factors have significant effects on the levels of ground-borne vibration. Table 7-2 is a summary of some of the many factors that are known to have, or are suspected of having, a significant influence on the levels of ground-borne vibration and noise. As indicated, the physical parameters of the transit facility, the geology, and the receiving building all influence the vibration levels. The important physical parameters can be divided into the following four categories:

- **Operational and Vehicle Factors:** This category includes all of the parameters that relate to the vehicle and operation of the trains. Factors such as high speed, stiff primary suspensions on the vehicle, and flat or worn wheels will increase the possibility of problems from ground-borne vibration.
- **Guideway:** The type and condition of the rails, the type of guideway, the rail support system, and the mass and stiffness of the guideway structure will all have an influence on the level of ground-borne vibration. Jointed rail, worn rail, and wheel impacts at special trackwork can all cause substantial increases in ground-borne vibration. A rail system guideway will be either subway, at-grade, or elevated. It is rare for ground-borne vibration to be a problem with elevated railways except when guideway supports are located within 50 feet of buildings. For guideways at-grade, directly radiated noise is usually the dominant problem, although vibration can be a problem. For subways, ground-borne vibration is often one of the most important environmental problems. For rubber-tired systems, the smoothness of the roadway/guideway is the critical factor; if the surface is smooth, vibration problems are unlikely.
- **Geology:** Soil and subsurface conditions are known to have a strong influence on the levels of ground-borne vibration. Among the most important factors are the stiffness and internal damping of the soil and the depth to bedrock. Experience with ground-borne vibration is that vibration propagation is more efficient in stiff clay soils, and shallow rock seems to concentrate the vibration energy close to the surface and can result in ground-borne vibration problems at large distances from the track. Factors such as layering of the soil and depth to water table can have significant effects on the propagation of ground-borne vibration.
- **Receiving Building:** The receiving building is a key component in the evaluation of ground-borne vibration since ground-borne vibration problems occur almost exclusively inside buildings. The train vibration may be perceptible to people who are outdoors, but it is very rare for outdoor vibration to cause complaints. The vibration levels inside a building are dependent on the vibration energy that reaches the building foundation, the coupling of the building foundation to the soil, and the propagation of the vibration through the building. The general guideline is that the heavier a building is, the lower the response will be to the incident vibration energy.

Table 7-2. Factors that Influence Levels of Ground-Borne Vibration and Noise	
<i>Factors Related to Vibration Source</i>	
Factors	Influence
Vehicle Suspension	If the suspension is stiff in the vertical direction, the effective vibration forces will be higher. On transit cars, only the primary suspension affects the vibration levels, the secondary suspension that supports the car body has no apparent effect.
Wheel Type and Condition	Use of pneumatic tires is one of the best methods of controlling ground-borne vibration. Normal resilient wheels on rail transit systems are usually too stiff to provide significant vibration reduction. Wheel flats and general wheel roughness are the major cause of vibration from steel wheel/steel rail systems.
Track/Roadway Surface	Rough track or rough roads are often the cause of vibration problems. Maintaining a smooth surface will reduce vibration levels.
Track Support System	On rail systems, the track support system is one of the major components in determining the levels of ground-borne vibration. The highest vibration levels are created by track that is rigidly attached to a concrete trackbed (e.g. track on wood half-ties embedded in the concrete). The vibration levels are much lower when special vibration control track systems such as resilient fasteners, ballast mats and floating slabs are used.
Speed	As intuitively expected, higher speeds result in higher vibration levels. Doubling speed usually results in a vibration level increase of 4 to 6 decibels.
Transit Structure	The general rule-of-thumb is that the heavier the transit structure, the lower the vibration levels. The vibration levels from a lightweight bored tunnel will usually be higher than from a poured concrete box subway.
Depth of Vibration Source	There are significant differences in the vibration characteristics when the source is underground compared to surface level.
<i>Factors Related to Vibration Path</i>	
Factor	Influence
Soil Type	Vibration levels are generally higher in stiff clay-type soils than in loose sandy soils.
Rock Layers	Vibration levels are usually high near at-grade track when the depth to bedrock is 30 feet or less. Subways founded in rock will result in lower vibration amplitudes close to the subway. Because of efficient propagation, the vibration level does not attenuate as rapidly in rock as it does in soil.
Soil Layering	Soil layering will have a substantial, but unpredictable, effect on the vibration levels since each stratum can have significantly different dynamic characteristics.
Depth to Water Table	The presence of the water table may have a significant effect on ground-borne vibration, but a definite relationship has not been established.
<i>Factors Related to Vibration Receiver</i>	
Factor	Influence
Foundation Type	The general rule-of-thumb is that the heavier the building foundation, the greater the coupling loss as the vibration propagates from the ground into the building.
Building Construction	Since ground-borne vibration and noise are almost always evaluated in terms of indoor receivers, the propagation of the vibration through the building must be considered. Each building has different characteristics relative to structureborne vibration, although the general rule-of-thumb is the more massive the building, the lower the levels of ground-borne vibration.
Acoustical Absorption	The amount of acoustical absorption in the receiver room affects the levels of ground-borne noise.

REFERENCES

1. American National Standards Institute, Guide to the Evaluation of Human Exposure to Vibration in Buildings. ANSI S3.29-1983
2. International Organization for Standardization, "Evaluation of Human exposure to whole body vibration: Part 2 – Continuous and shock-induced vibration in buildings (1 – 80 Hz), ISO 2361-2-1989
3. International Organization for Standardization, "Mechanical Vibration and Shock : Evaluation of human exposure to whole body vibration: Part 2 – Vibration in buildings (1 to 80 Hz), ISO 2631-2-2003.
4. J. T. Nelson, H. J. Saurenman, "State-of-the-Art Review: Prediction and Control of Groundborne Noise and Vibration from Rail Transit Trains," U.S. Department of Transportation, Urban Mass Transportation Administration, Report Number UMTA-MA-06-0049-83-4, DOT-TSC-UMTA-83-3, December 1983.
5. Y. Tokita, "Vibration Pollution Problems in Japan," In Inter-Noise 75, Sendai, Japan, pp. 465-472, 1975.

8. VIBRATION IMPACT CRITERIA

Because of the relatively rare occurrence of annoyance due to ground-borne vibration and noise, there has been only limited sponsored research of human response to building vibration and structure-borne noise. However, with the construction of new rail rapid transit systems in the past 30 years, considerable experience has been gained as to how people react to various levels of building vibration. This experience, combined with the available national and international standards,^(1,2,3) represents a good foundation for predicting annoyance from ground-borne noise and vibration in residential areas as well as interference with vibration-sensitive activities.

The criteria for environmental impact from ground-borne vibration and noise are based on the maximum root-mean-square (rms) vibration levels for repeated events of the same source. The criteria presented in Table 8-1 account for variation in project types as well as the frequency of events, which differ widely among transit projects. Most experience is with the community response to ground-borne vibration from rail rapid transit systems with typical headways in the range of 3 to 10 minutes and each vibration event lasting less than 10 seconds. It is intuitive that when there will be many fewer events each day, as is typical for commuter rail projects, it should take higher vibration levels to evoke the same community response. This is accounted for in the criteria by distinguishing between projects with varying numbers of events, where *Frequent Events* are defined as more than 70 events per day, *Occasional Events* range between 30 and 70 events per day, and *Infrequent Events* are fewer than 30 events per day. Most commuter rail branch lines will fall into the infrequent events category, although the trunk lines of some commuter rail lines serving major cities are in the occasional events category.

The criteria are primarily based on experience with passenger train operations with only limited experience from freight train operations. The difference is that passenger train operations, whether rapid transit, commuter rail, or intercity passenger railroad, create vibration events that last less than about 10 seconds. A typical line-haul freight train is about 5000 feet long. At a speed of 30 mph, it will take a 5000-foot freight train approximately two minutes to pass. Even though the criteria are primarily based on experience with shorter vibration events and this manual is oriented to transit projects, there will be

situations where potential impacts from freight train ground-borne vibration will need to be evaluated. The prime example is when freight train tracks must be relocated to provide space for a transit project within a railroad right-of-way. Some guidelines for applying these criteria to freight train operations are given later in this chapter.

8.1 VIBRATION IMPACT CRITERIA FOR GENERAL ASSESSMENT

8.1.1 Sensitive-Use Categories

The criteria for acceptable ground-borne vibration are expressed in terms of rms velocity levels in decibels and the criteria for acceptable ground-borne noise are expressed in terms of A-weighted sound levels. The limits are specified for the three land-use categories defined below:

- **Vibration Category 1 - High Sensitivity:** Included in Category 1 are buildings where vibration would interfere with operations within the building, including levels that may be well below those associated with human annoyance. Concert halls and other special-use facilities are covered separately in Table 8-2. Typical land uses covered by Category 1 are: vibration-sensitive research and manufacturing, hospitals with vibration-sensitive equipment, and university research operations. The degree of sensitivity to vibration will depend on the specific equipment that will be affected by the vibration. Equipment such as electron microscopes and high resolution lithographic equipment can be very sensitive to vibration, and even normal optical microscopes will sometimes be difficult to use when vibration is well below the human annoyance level. Manufacturing of computer chips is an example of a vibration-sensitive process.

The vibration limits for Vibration Category 1 are based on acceptable vibration for moderately vibration-sensitive equipment such as optical microscopes and electron microscopes with vibration isolation systems. Defining limits for equipment that is even more sensitive requires a detailed review of the specific equipment involved. This type of review is usually performed during the Detailed Analysis associated with the final design phase and not as part of the environmental impact assessment. Mitigation of transit vibration that affects sensitive equipment typically involves modification of the equipment mounting system or relocation of the equipment rather than applying vibration control measures to the transit project.

Note that this category does not include most computer installations or telephone switching equipment. Although the owners of this type of equipment often are very concerned about the potential of ground-borne vibration interrupting smooth operation of their equipment, it is rare for computer or other electronic equipment to be particularly sensitive to vibration. Most such equipment is designed to operate in typical building environments where the equipment may experience occasional shock from bumping and continuous background vibration caused by other equipment.

- **Vibration Category 2 - Residential:** This category covers all residential land uses and any buildings where people sleep, such as hotels and hospitals. No differentiation is made between different types of residential areas. This is primarily because ground-borne vibration and noise are experienced indoors and building occupants have practically no means to reduce their exposure. Even in a noisy

urban area, the bedrooms often will be quiet in buildings that have effective noise insulation and tightly closed windows. Moreover, street traffic often abates at night when transit continues to operate. Hence, an occupant of a bedroom in a noisy urban area is likely to be just as exposed to ground-borne noise and vibration as someone in a quiet suburban area. The criteria apply to the transit-generated ground-borne vibration and noise whether the source is subway or surface running trains.

- **Vibration Category 3 - Institutional:** Vibration Category 3 includes schools, churches, other institutions, and quiet offices that do not have vibration-sensitive equipment, but still have the potential for activity interference. Although it is generally appropriate to include office buildings in this category, it is not appropriate to include all buildings that have any office space. For example, most industrial buildings have office space, but it is not intended that buildings primarily for industrial use be included in this category.

Table 8-1. Ground-Borne Vibration (GBV) and Ground-Borne Noise (GBN) Impact Criteria for General Assessment

Land Use Category	GBV Impact Levels (VdB re 1 micro-inch /sec)			GBN Impact Levels (dB re 20 micro Pascals)		
	Frequent Events ¹	Occasional Events ²	Infrequent Events ³	Frequent Events ¹	Occasional Events ²	Infrequent Events ³
Category 1: Buildings where vibration would interfere with interior operations.	65 VdB ⁴	65 VdB ⁴	65 VdB ⁴	N/A ⁴	N/A ⁴	N/A ⁴
Category 2: Residences and buildings where people normally sleep.	72 VdB	75 VdB	80 VdB	35 dBA	38 dBA	43 dBA
Category 3: Institutional land uses with primarily daytime use.	75 VdB	78 VdB	83 VdB	40 dBA	43 dBA	48 dBA

Notes:

1. "Frequent Events" is defined as more than 70 vibration events of the same source per day. Most rapid transit projects fall into this category.
2. "Occasional Events" is defined as between 30 and 70 vibration events of the same source per day. Most commuter trunk lines have this many operations.
3. "Infrequent Events" is defined as fewer than 30 vibration events of the same kind per day. This category includes most commuter rail branch lines.
4. This criterion limit is based on levels that are acceptable for most moderately sensitive equipment such as optical microscopes. Vibration-sensitive manufacturing or research will require detailed evaluation to define the acceptable vibration levels. Ensuring lower vibration levels in a building often requires special design of the HVAC systems and stiffened floors.
5. Vibration-sensitive equipment is generally not sensitive to ground-borne noise.

There are some buildings, such as concert halls, TV and recording studios, and theaters, that can be very sensitive to vibration and noise but do not fit into any of the three categories. Because of the sensitivity of these buildings, they usually warrant special attention during the environmental assessment of a transit project. Table 8-2 gives criteria for acceptable levels of ground-borne vibration and noise for various types of special buildings.

Table 8-2. Ground-Borne Vibration and Noise Impact Criteria for Special Buildings				
Type of Building or Room	Ground-Borne Vibration Impact Levels (VdB re 1 micro-inch/sec)		Ground-Borne Noise Impact Levels (dB re 20 micro-Pascals)	
	Frequent¹ Events	Occasional or Infrequent² Events	Frequent¹ Events	Occasional or Infrequent² Events
Concert Halls	65 VdB	65 VdB	25 dBA	25 dBA
TV Studios	65 VdB	65 VdB	25 dBA	25 dBA
Recording Studios	65 VdB	65 VdB	25 dBA	25 dBA
Auditoriums	72 VdB	80 VdB	30 dBA	38 dBA
Theaters	72 VdB	80 VdB	35 dBA	43 dBA
Notes: 1."Frequent Events" is defined as more than 70 vibration events per day. Most rapid transit projects fall into this category. 2."Occasional or Infrequent Events" is defined as fewer than 70 vibration events per day. This category includes most commuter rail systems. 3.If the building will rarely be occupied when the trains are operating, there is no need to consider impact. As an example, consider locating a commuter rail line next to a concert hall. If no commuter trains will operate after 7 pm, it should be rare that the trains interfere with the use of the hall.				

The criteria in Tables 8-1 and 8-2 are related to ground-borne vibration causing human annoyance or interfering with use of vibration-sensitive equipment. It is extremely rare for vibration from train operations to cause any sort of building damage, even minor cosmetic damage. However, there is sometimes concern about damage to fragile historic buildings located near the right-of-way. Even in these cases, damage is unlikely except when the track will be very close to the structure. Damage thresholds that apply to these structures are discussed in Section 12.2.2.

8.1.2 Existing Vibration Conditions

One factor not incorporated in the criteria is how to account for existing vibration. In most cases, the existing environment does not include a significant number of perceptible ground-borne vibration or noise events. The most common example of needing to account for the pre-existing vibration is when the project will be located in an existing rail corridor. When the project will cause vibration more than 5 VdB greater than the existing source, the existing source can be ignored and the standard vibration criteria applied to the project. Following are methods of handling representative scenarios:

1. *Infrequently-used rail corridor (fewer than 5 trains per day):* Use the general vibration criteria, Tables 8-1 and 8-2.

2. *Moderately-used rail corridor (5 to 12 trains per day):* If the existing train vibration exceeds the impact criteria given in Tables 8-1 and 8-2, there will be no impact from the project vibration if the levels estimated using the procedures outlined in either Chapter 10 or 11 are at least 5VdB less than the existing train vibration. Otherwise, vibration criteria in Tables 8-1 and 8-2 apply to the project. The existing train vibration can be either measured or estimated using the General Assessment procedures in Chapter 10. It is usually preferable to measure vibration from existing train traffic.
3. *Heavily-used rail corridor (more than 12 trains per day):* If the existing train vibration exceeds the impact criteria given in Tables 8-1 and 8-2, the project will cause additional impact if the project significantly increases the number of vibration events. Approximately doubling the number of events is required for a significant increase.

If there is not a significant increase in vibration events, there will be additional impact only if the project vibration, estimated using the procedures of Chapters 10 or 11, will be 3 VdB or more higher than the existing vibration. An example of a case with no additional impact would be an automated people mover system planned for a corridor with an existing rapid transit service with 220 trains per day. On the other hand, there could be impact if it is a new commuter rail line planned to share a corridor with the rapid transit system. In this latter case, the project vibrations are likely to be higher than the existing vibrations by 3 VdB or more.

4. *Moving existing tracks:* Another scenario where existing vibration can be significant is when a new transit project will use an existing railroad right-of-way and result in shifting the location of existing railroad tracks. The track relocation and reconstruction can result in lower vibration levels, in which case this aspect of the project represents a benefit, not an adverse impact. If the track relocation will cause higher vibration levels at sensitive receptors, then the projected vibration levels must be compared to the appropriate impact criterion to determine if there will be new impacts. If impact is judged to have existed prior to moving the tracks, new impact will be assessed only if the relocation results in more than a 3 VdB increase in vibration level.

8.1.3 Application to Freight Trains

The impact thresholds given in Tables 8-1 and 8-2 are based on experience with vibration from rail transit systems. They have been used to assess vibration from freight trains since no specific impact criteria exist for freight railroads. However, the significantly greater length, weight and axle loads of freight trains make it problematic to use these impact criteria for freight rail. Nevertheless, in shared right-of-way situations where the proposed transit alignment causes the freight tracks to be moved closer to sensitive sites, these impact criteria will have to be used. In assessing the freight train vibration, a dual approach is recommended with separate consideration of the locomotive and rail car vibration. Because the locomotive vibration only lasts for a very short time, the few-event criterion is appropriate for fewer than 30 events per day. However, for a typical line-haul freight train where the rail car vibration lasts for several minutes, the many-event limits should be applied to the rail car vibration. Some judgment must be exercised to make sure that the approach is reasonable. For example, some spur rail lines carry very

little rail traffic (sometimes only one train per week) or have short trains, in which case the criteria may be disregarded altogether.

Finally, it should be pointed out that the vibration control measures developed for rail transit systems are not effective for freight trains. Consequently, any decision to relocate freight tracks closer to sensitive sites should be made with the understanding that the increased vibration impact due to freight rail will be very difficult, if not impossible, to mitigate.

8.2 VIBRATION IMPACT CRITERIA FOR DETAILED ANALYSIS

8.2.1 Ground-Borne Vibration

Specification of mitigation measures requires more detailed information and more refined impact criteria than what were used in the General Assessment. A frequency distribution, or spectrum, of the vibration energy determines whether the vibrations are likely to generate a significant response in a receiving building or structure. The Detailed Analysis method in this manual provides an estimate of building response in terms of a one-third octave band frequency spectrum. This section provides criteria for assessing the potential for interference or annoyance from building response and for determining the performance of vibration reduction methods.

International standards have been developed for the effects of vibration on people in buildings with ratings related to annoyance and interference with activities based on frequency distribution of acceptable vibrations.⁽²⁾ These criteria have been supplemented by industry standards for vibration-sensitive equipment.⁽³⁾ Both sets of criteria are expressed in terms of one-third octave band velocity spectra, with transient events like train passbys described in terms of the maximum rms vibration velocity level with a one-second averaging time. The measurement point is specified as the floor of the receiving building at the location of the prescribed activity.

The vibration impact criteria are shown in Figure 8-1 where the international standard curves and the industry standards are plotted on the same figure. Interpretations of the various levels are presented in Table 8-3. Detailed Analysis results in one-third octave band spectra levels that are plotted over the curves shown in Figure 8-1. Band levels that exceed a particular criterion curve indicate the need for mitigation and the frequency range within which the treatment needs to be effective.

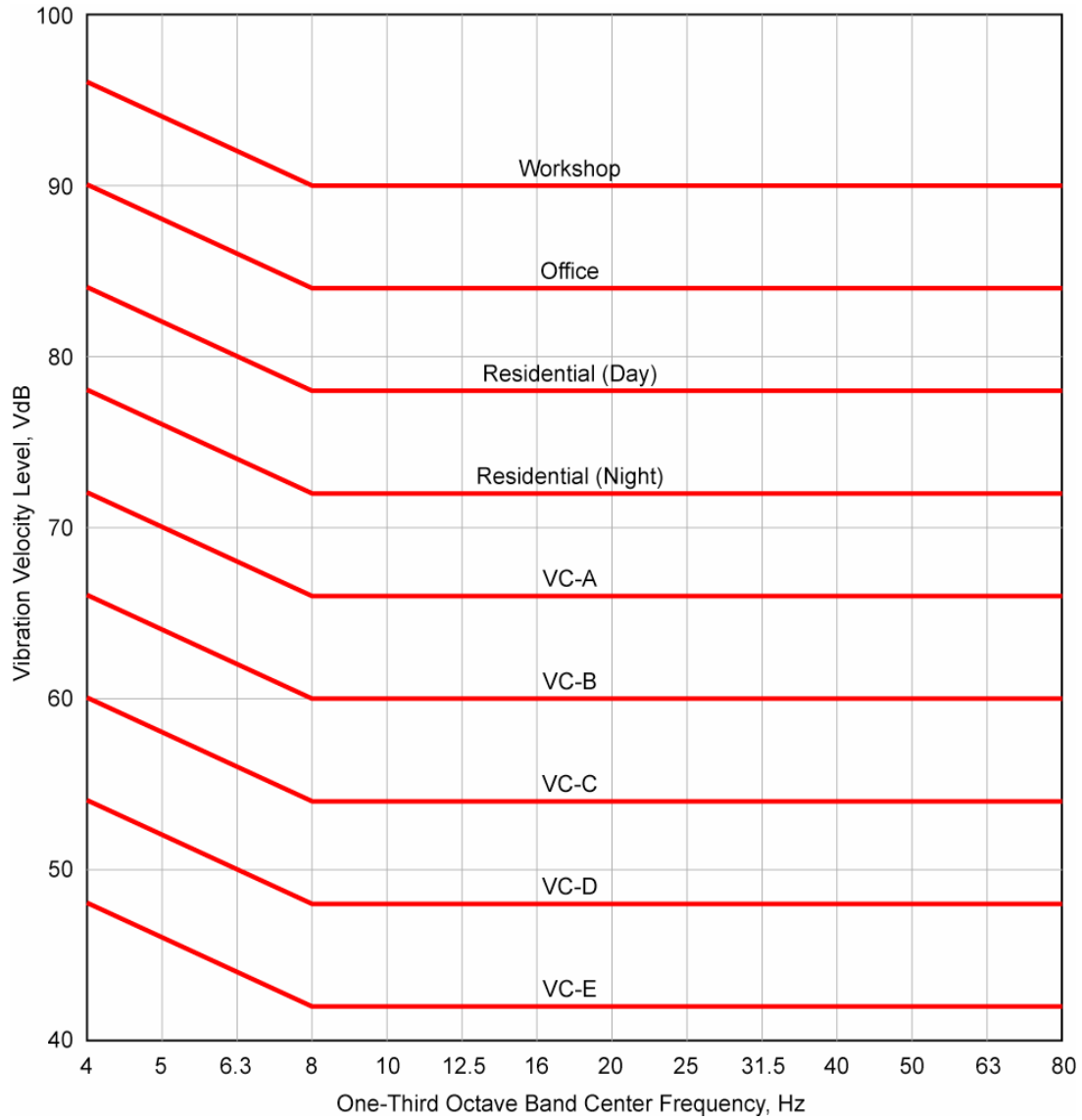


Figure 8-1. Criteria for Detailed Vibration Analysis

Table 8-3. Interpretation of Vibration Criteria for Detailed Analysis

Criterion Curve¹ (See Figure 8-1)	Max L_v (VdB)²	Description of Use
Workshop	90	Distinctly feelable vibration. Appropriate to workshops and non-sensitive areas.
Office	84	Feelable vibration. Appropriate to offices and non-sensitive areas.
Residential Day	78	Barely feelable vibration. Adequate for computer equipment and low-power optical microscopes (up to 20X).
Residential Night, Operating Rooms	72	Vibration not feelable, but ground-borne noise may be audible inside quiet rooms. Suitable for medium-power optical microscopes (100X) and other equipment of low sensitivity.
VC-A	66	Adequate for medium- to high-power optical microscopes (400X), microbalances, optical balances, and similar specialized equipment.
VC-B	60	Adequate for high-power optical microscopes (1000X), inspection and lithography equipment to 3 micron line widths.
VC-C	54	Appropriate for most lithography and inspection equipment to 1 micron detail size.
VC-D	48	Suitable in most instances for the most demanding equipment, including electron microscopes operating to the limits of their capability.
VC-E	42	The most demanding criterion for extremely vibration-sensitive equipment.

¹Descriptors on curves are those provided by References 2 and 3.

²As measured in 1/3-octave bands of frequency over the frequency range 8 to 80 Hz.

These criteria use a frequency spectrum because vibration-related problems generally occur due to resonances of the structural components of a building or vibration-sensitive equipment. Resonant response is frequency-dependent. A Detailed Analysis can provide an assessment that identifies potential problems resulting from resonances.

The detailed vibration criteria are based on generic cases when people are standing or equipment is mounted on the floor in a conventional manner. Consequently, the criteria are less stringent at very low frequencies below 8 Hz. Where special vibration isolation has been provided in the form of pneumatic isolators, the resonant frequency of the isolation system is very low. Consequently, in this special case, the curves may be extended flat at lower frequencies.

8.2.2 Ground-Borne Noise

Ground-borne noise impacts are assessed based on criteria for human annoyance and activity interference. The results of the Detailed Analysis provide vibration spectra inside a building. These vibration spectra can be converted to sound pressure level spectra in the occupied spaces using the method described in Section 11.2.2. For residential buildings, the criteria for acceptability are given in terms of the A-weighted sound pressure level in Table 8-1. For special buildings listed in Table 8-2, a single-valued level may not be sufficient to assess activity interference at the Detailed Analysis stage. Each special building may have a unique specification for acceptable noise levels. For example, a recording studio may have stringent requirements for allowable noise in each frequency band. Therefore, the ground-borne noise criteria for each sensitive building in this category will have to be determined on a case-by-case basis.

REFERENCES

1. Acoustical Society of America, "American National Standard: Guide to Evaluation of Human Exposure to Vibration in Buildings," ANSI S3.29-1983 (ASA 48-1983).
2. International Organization for Standardization, "Evaluation of Human Exposure to Whole-Body Vibration, Part 2: Continuous and Shock-Induced Vibrations in Buildings (1-80Hz)," ISO-2361-2, 1989.
3. Institute of Environmental Sciences and Technology, "Considerations in Clean Room Design," RR-CC012.1, 1993.

9. VIBRATION SCREENING PROCEDURE

The vibration screening procedure is designed to identify projects that have little possibility of creating significant adverse impact. If the screening procedure does not identify any potential problem areas, it is usually safe to eliminate further consideration of vibration impact from the environmental analysis.

9.1 STEPS IN SCREENING PROCEDURE

The steps in the vibration screening procedure are summarized in Figure 9-1 in a flow chart format. Following is a summary of the steps:

Initial Decision: If the project includes any type of steel-wheeled/steel-rail vehicle, there is potential for vibration impact. Proceed directly to the evaluation of screening distances. Transit projects that do not involve vehicles, such as a station rehabilitation, do not have potential for vibration impact unless the track system will be modified (e.g., tracks moved or switches modified). Rail systems include urban rapid transit, light rail transit, commuter rail, and steel-wheel intermediate capacity transit systems. For projects that involve rubber-tire vehicles, vibration impact is unlikely except in unusual situations. Three specific factors shown in Figure 9-1 should be checked to determine if there is potential vibration impact from bus projects or any other projects that involve rubber-tire vehicles:

1. Will there be expansion joints, speed bumps, or other design features that result in unevenness in the road surface near vibration-sensitive buildings? Such irregularities can result in perceptible ground-borne vibration at distances up to 75 feet away.
2. Will buses, trucks or other heavy vehicles be operating close to a sensitive building? Research using electron microscopes and manufacturing of computer chips are examples of vibration-sensitive activities.

3. Does the project include operation of vehicles inside or directly underneath buildings that are vibration-sensitive? Special considerations are often required for shared-use facilities such as a bus station located inside an office building complex.

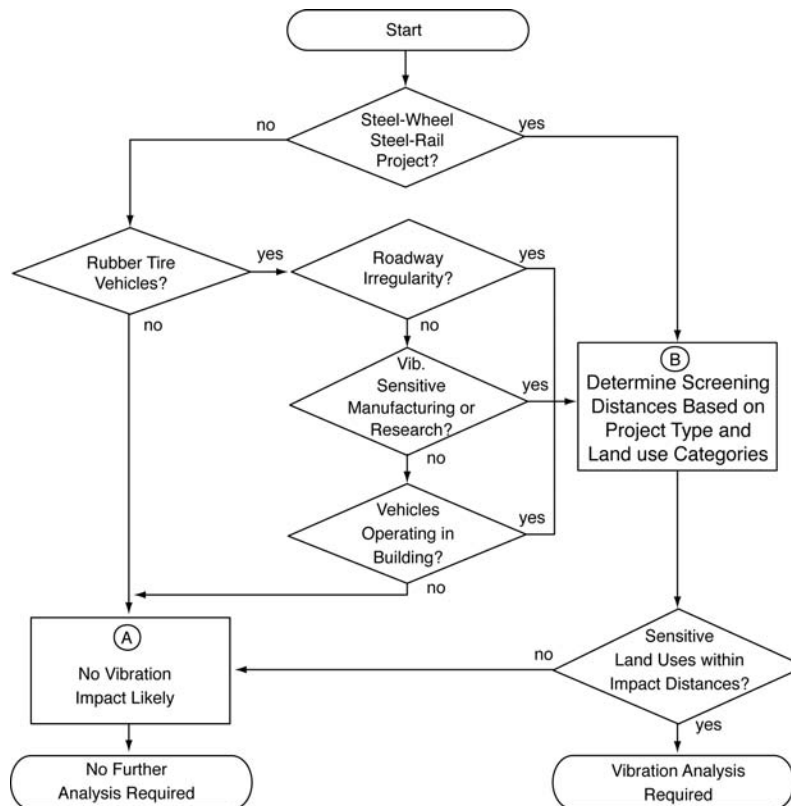


Figure 9-1. Flow Chart of Vibration Screening Process

No Impact (Box A): The decisions in step 1 lead to either box A, "No vibration impact likely," or box B. Reaching box A indicates that further analysis is not required. The majority of smaller FTA-assisted projects, such as bus terminals and park-and-ride lots, will be eliminated from further consideration of ground-borne vibration impact in the first step.

Screening Distances (Box B): If the result of the first step is that there is potential for vibration impact, determine if any vibration-sensitive land uses are within the screening zones. Vibration-sensitive land uses are identified in Chapter 8. Tables 9-1 and 9-2 are used to determine the applicable vibration screening distances for the project.

Impact: If there are any vibration-sensitive land uses within the screening distances, there is the potential for vibration impact. The result of the screening procedure is that a General Vibration Assessment should be done as part of the environmental analysis.

9.2 SCREENING DISTANCES

9.2.1 Project Categories

The vibration screening procedure is applicable to all types of FTA-assisted projects. The project categories for the vibration screening procedure are summarized in Table 9-1 for four types of rail transit. The fifth category includes all bus projects. Any project that does not include some type of vehicle is not likely to cause vibration impact.

With respect to Project Type 5, the rubber-tire vehicle category, most complaints about vibration caused by buses and trucks are related to rattling of windows or items hung on the walls. These vibrations are usually the result of airborne noise and not ground-borne vibration. In the case where ground-borne vibration is the source of the problem, the vibration can usually be related to potholes, some sort of bump in the road, or other irregularities.

Table 9-1. Project Types for Vibration Screening Procedure	
Project Type	Description
1. Conventional Commuter Railroad	Both the locomotives and the passenger vehicles create significant vibration. The highest vibration levels are usually created by the locomotives. Electric commuter rail vehicles create levels of ground-borne vibration that are comparable to electric rapid transit vehicles.
2. Rail Rapid Transit	Ground-borne vibration impact from rapid transit trains is one of the major environmental issues for new systems. For operation in subway, the ground-borne vibration is usually a significant environmental impact. It is less common for at-grade and elevated rapid transit lines to create intrusive ground-borne vibration.
3. Light Rail Transit	The ground-borne vibration characteristics of light rail systems are very similar to those of rapid transit systems. Because the speeds of light rail systems are usually lower, the typical vibration levels usually are lower. Steel-wheel/steel-rail Automated Guideway Transit (AGT) will fall into either this category or the Intermediate Capacity Transit category depending on the level of service and train speeds.
4. Intermediate Capacity Transit	Because of the low operating speeds of most ICT systems, significant vibration problems are not common. However, steel-wheel ICT systems that operate close to vibration-sensitive buildings have the potential of causing intrusive vibration. With a stiff suspension system, an ICT system could create intrusive vibration.
5. Bus and Rubber-Tire Transit Projects	This category encompasses most projects that do not include steel-wheel trains of some type. Examples are diesel buses, electric trolley buses, and rubber-tired people movers. Most projects that do not include steel-wheel trains do not cause significant vibration impact.

9.2.2 Distances

The screening distances are given in Table 9-2. These distances are based on the criteria presented in Chapter 8, with a 5-decibel factor of safety included. The distances have been determined using vibration

prediction procedures that are summarized in Chapter 10 assuming "normal" vibration propagation. As discussed in Chapter 10, efficient vibration propagation can result in substantially higher vibration levels.

Because of the 5-decibel safety factor, even with efficient propagation, the screening distances will identify most of the potentially impacted areas. By not specifically accounting for the possibility of efficient vibration propagation, there is some possibility that some potential impact areas will not be identified in the screening process. When there is evidence of efficient propagation, such as previous complaints about existing transit facilities or a history of problems with construction vibration, the distances in Table 9-2 should be increased by a factor of 1.5.

Table 9-2. Screening Distances for Vibration Assessment			
Type of Project	Critical Distance for Land Use Categories* Distance from Right-of-Way or Property Line		
	Cat. 1	Cat. 2	Cat. 3
Conventional Commuter Railroad	600	200	120
Rail Rapid Transit	600	200	120
Light Rail Transit	450	150	100
Intermediate Capacity Transit	200	100	50
Bus Projects (if not previously screened out)	100	50	--
* The land-use categories are defined in Chapter 8. Some vibration-sensitive land uses are not included in these categories. Examples are: concert halls and TV studios which, for the screening procedure, should be evaluated as Category 1; and theaters and auditoriums which should be evaluated as Category 2.			

10. GENERAL VIBRATION ASSESSMENT

This chapter outlines procedures that can be used to develop generalized predictions of ground-borne vibration and noise. This manual includes three different levels of detail for projecting ground-borne vibration:

- **Screening:** The screening procedure is discussed in Chapter 9. A standard table of impact distances is used to determine if ground-borne vibration from the project may affect sensitive land uses. More detailed analysis is required if any sensitive land uses are within the screening distances. The screening procedure does not require any specific knowledge about the vibration characteristics of the system or the geology of the area. If different propagation conditions are known to be present, a simple adjustment is provided.
- **General Assessment:** The general level of assessment, as described in this chapter, is an extension of the screening procedure. It uses generalized data to develop a curve of vibration level as a function of distance from the track. The vibration levels at specific buildings are estimated by reading values from the curve and applying adjustments to account for factors such as track support system, vehicle speed, type of building, and track and wheel condition. The general level deals only with the overall vibration velocity level and the A-weighted sound level. It does not consider the frequency spectrum of the vibration or noise.
- **Detailed Analysis:** Discussed in Chapter 11, the Detailed Analysis involves applying all of the available tools for accurately projecting the vibration impact at specific sites. The procedure outlined in this manual includes a test of the vehicle (or similar vehicle) to define the forces generated by the vibration source and tests at the site in question to define how the local geology affects vibration propagation. It is considerably more complex to develop detailed projections of ground-borne vibration than it is to develop detailed projections of airborne noise. Accurate projections of ground-

borne vibration require professionals with experience in performing and interpreting vibration propagation tests. As such, detailed vibration predictions are usually performed during the final design phase of a project when there is sufficient reason to suspect adverse vibration impact from the project. The procedure for Detailed Vibration Analysis presented in Chapter 11 is based on measurements to characterize vibration propagation at specific sites.

There is not always a clear distinction between general and detailed predictions. For example, it is often appropriate to use several representative measurements of vibration propagation along the planned alignment in developing generalized propagation curves. Other times, generalized prediction curves may be sufficient for the majority of the alignment, but with Detailed Analysis applied to particularly sensitive buildings such as a concert hall. The methods for analyzing transit vibration in this manual are consistent with those described in recognized handbooks and international standards.^(1, 2)

The purpose of the General Assessment is to provide a relatively simple method of developing estimates of the overall levels of ground-borne vibration and noise that can be compared to the acceptability criteria given in Chapter 8. For many projects, particularly when comparing alternatives, this level of detail will be sufficient for the environmental impact assessment. Where there are potential problems, the Detailed Analysis is then undertaken during final design of the selected alternative to accurately define the level of impact and design mitigation measures. A Detailed Analysis usually will be required when designing special track-support systems such as floating slabs or ballast mats. Detailed Analysis is not usually required if, as is often the case, the mitigation measure consists of relocating a crossover or turnout. Usually, the General Assessment is adequate to determine whether a crossover needs to be relocated.

The basic approach for the General Assessment is to define a curve, or set of curves, that predicts the overall ground-surface vibration as a function of distance from the source, then apply adjustments to these curves to account for factors such as vehicle speed, building type, and receiver location within the building. Section 10.1 includes curves of vibration level as a function of distance from the source for the common types of vibration sources such as rapid transit trains and buses. When the vehicle type is not covered by the curves included in this section, it will be necessary to define an appropriate curve either by extrapolating from existing information or performing measurements at an existing facility.

10.1 SELECTION OF BASE CURVE FOR GROUND SURFACE VIBRATION LEVEL

The base curves for three standard transportation systems are defined in Figure 10-1. This figure shows typical ground-surface vibration levels assuming equipment in good condition and speeds of 50 mph for the rail systems and 30 mph for buses. The levels must be adjusted to account for factors such as different speeds and different geologic conditions than assumed. The adjustment factors are discussed in Section 10.2.

The curves in Figure 10-1 are based on measurements of ground-borne vibration at representative North American transit systems. The top curve applies to trains that are powered by diesel or electric locomotives. It includes intercity passenger trains and commuter rail trains. The curve for rapid transit rail cars covers both heavy and light-rail vehicles on at-grade and subway track. It is somewhat surprising that subway and at-grade track can be represented by the same curve since ground-borne vibration created by a train operating in a subway has very different characteristics than vibration from at-grade track. However, in spite of these differences, the overall vibration velocity levels are comparable. Subways tend to have more vibration problems than at-grade track. This is probably due to two factors: (1) subways are usually located in more densely developed areas, and (2) the airborne noise is usually a more serious problem for at-grade systems than the ground-borne vibration. Another difference between subway and at-grade track is that the ground-borne vibration from subways tends to be higher frequency than the vibration from at-grade track, which makes the ground-borne noise more noticeable.

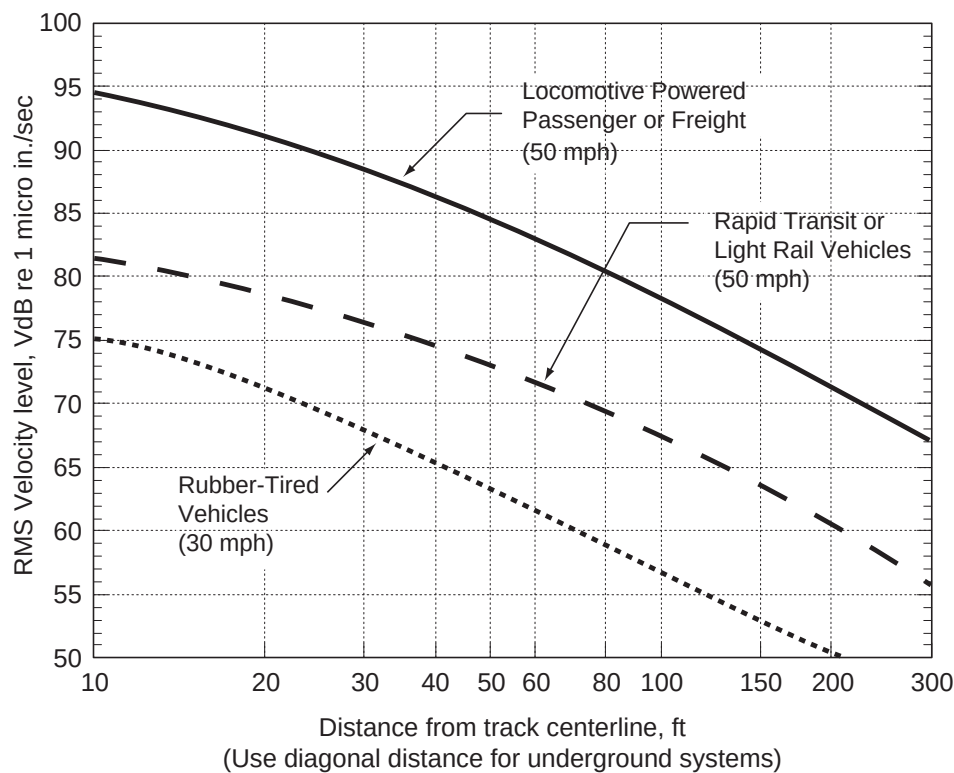


Figure 10-1. Generalized Ground Surface Vibration Curves

The curves in Figure 10-1 were developed from many measurements of ground-borne vibration. Experience with ground-borne vibration data is that, for any specific type of transit mode, a significant variation in vibration levels under apparently similar conditions is not uncommon. The curves in Figure

10-1 represent the upper range of the measurement data from well-maintained systems. Although actual levels fluctuate widely, it is rare that ground-borne vibration will exceed the curves in Figure 10-1 by more than one or two decibels unless there are extenuating circumstances, such as wheel- or running-surface defects.

One approach to dealing with the normal fluctuation is to show projections as a range. For example, the projected level from Figure 10-1 for an LRT system with train speeds of 50 mph is about 72 VdB at a distance of 60 feet from the track centerline, just at the threshold for acceptable ground-borne vibration for residential land uses. To help illustrate the normal fluctuation, the projected level of ground-borne vibration might be given as 67 to 72 VdB. This approach is not recommended since it tends to confuse the interpretation of whether or not the projected vibration levels exceed the impact threshold. However, because actual levels of ground-borne vibration will sometimes differ substantially from the projections, some care must be taken when interpreting projections. Some guidelines are given below:

1. Projected vibration is below the impact threshold. Vibration impact is unlikely in this case.
2. Projected ground-borne vibration is 0 to 5 decibels greater than the impact threshold. In this range there is still a significant chance that actual ground-borne vibration levels will be below the impact threshold. In this case, the impact would be reported in the environmental document as exceeding the applicable threshold and a commitment would be made to conduct more detailed studies to refine the vibration impact analysis during final design and determine appropriate mitigation, if necessary. A site-specific Detailed Analysis may show that vibration control measures are not needed.
3. Projected ground-borne vibration is 5 decibels or more greater than the impact threshold. Vibration impact is probable and Detailed Analysis will be needed during final design to help determine appropriate vibration control measures.

The two most important factors that must be accounted for in a General Assessment are the type of vibration source (the mode of transit) and the vibration propagation characteristics. It is well known that there are situations where ground-borne vibration propagates much more efficiently than normal. The result is unacceptable vibration levels at distances two to three times the normal distance. Unfortunately, the geologic conditions that promote efficient propagation have not been well documented and are not fully understood. Shallow bedrock or stiff clay soil often are involved. One possibility is that shallow bedrock acts to keep the vibration energy near the surface. Much of the energy that would normally radiate down is directed back towards the surface by the rock layer with the result that the ground surface vibration is higher than normal.

The selection of a base curve depends on the mode of rail transit under consideration. Appropriate correction factors are then added to account for any unusual propagation characteristics. For less common modes such as magnetically-levitated vehicles (maglev), monorail, or automated guideway transit (AGT), it is necessary to either make a judgment about which curve and adjustment factors best fit the mode or to develop new estimates of vibration level as a function of distance from the track. For

example, the vibration from a rubber-tire monorail that will be operating on aerial guideway can be approximated using the bus/rubber tire systems with the appropriate adjustment for the aerial structure. Another example is a magnetic levitation system. Most of the data available on the noise and vibration characteristics of maglev vehicles comes from high-speed systems intended for inter-city service. Even though there is no direct contact between the vehicle and the guideway, the dynamic loads on the guideway can generate ground-borne vibration. Measurements on a German high-speed maglev resulted in ground-borne vibrations at 75 mph comparable to the base curve for rubber-tired vehicles at 30 mph.⁽³⁾ Considerations for selecting a base curve are discussed below:

- **Intercity Passenger Trains:** Although intercity passenger trains can be an important source of environmental vibration, it is rare that they are significant for FTA-funded projects unless a new transit mode will use an existing rail alignment. When a new transit line will use an existing rail alignment, the changes in the intercity passenger traffic can result in either positive or negative impacts. Unless there are specific data available on the ground-borne vibration created by the train operations, the upper curve in Figure 10-1 should be used for intercity passenger trains.
- **Locomotive-Powered Commuter Rail:** The locomotive curve from Figure 10-1 should be used for any commuter rail system powered by either diesel or electric locomotives. The locomotives often create vibration levels that are 3 to 8 decibels higher than those created by the passenger cars. Self-powered electric commuter rail trains can be considered to be similar to rapid transit vehicles. Although they are relatively rare in the U.S., self-powered diesel multiple units (DMU's) create vibration levels somewhere between rapid transit vehicles and locomotive-powered passenger trains. When the axle loads and suspension parameters of a particular DMU are comparable to typical rapid transit vehicles, the rapid transit curve in Figure 10-1 can be used for that mode.
- **Subway Heavy Rail:** Complaints about ground-borne vibration are more common near subways than near at-grade track. This is not because subways create higher vibration levels than at-grade systems - rather it is because subways are usually located in high-density areas in close proximity to building foundations. When applied to subways, the rapid transit curve in Figure 10-1 assumes a relatively lightweight bored concrete tunnel in soil. The vibration levels will be lower for heavier subway structures such as cut-and-cover box structures and stations.
- **At-Grade Heavy Rail or LRT:** The available data show that heavy rail and light rail transit vehicles create similar levels of ground-borne vibration. This is not surprising since the vehicles have similar suspension systems and axle loads. Light-rail systems tend to have fewer problems with ground-borne vibration because of the lower operating speeds. Similar to the subway case, an adjustment factor must be used if the transit vehicle has a primary suspension that is stiff in the vertical direction.
- **Intermediate Capacity Transit:** The vibration levels created by an intermediate capacity transit system or an AGT system will depend on whether the vehicles have steel wheels or rubber wheels. If they have steel wheels, the transit car curve in Figure 10-1 should be used with appropriate adjustments for operating speed. The bus/rubber tire curve should be used for rubber-tired ICT systems.

- **Bus/Rubber Tire:** Rubber-tire vehicles rarely create ground-borne vibration problems unless there is a discontinuity or bump in the road that causes the vibration. The curve in Figure 10-1 shows the vibration level for a typical bus operating on smooth roadway.

10.2 ADJUSTMENTS

Once the base curve has been selected, the adjustments in Table 10-1 can be used to develop vibration projections for specific receiver positions inside buildings. All of the adjustments are given as single numbers to be added to, or subtracted from, the base level. The adjustment parameters are speed, wheel and rail type and condition, type of track support system, type of building foundation, and number of floors above the basement level. It should be recognized that many of these adjustments are strongly dependent on the frequency spectrum of the vibration source and the frequency dependence of the vibration propagation. The single number values are suitable for generalized evaluation of the vibration impact and vibration mitigation measures since they are based on typical vibration spectra. However, the single number adjustments are not adequate for detailed evaluations of impact of sensitive buildings or for detailed specification of mitigation measures. Detailed Analysis requires consideration of the relative importance of different frequency components.

**Table 10-1. Adjustment Factors for Generalized Predictions of
Ground-Borne Vibration and Noise**

Factors Affecting Vibration Source				
Source Factor	Adjustment to Propagation Curve			Comment
Speed		Reference Speed		Vibration level is approximately proportional to 20*log(speed/speed _{ref}). Sometimes the variation with speed has been observed to be as low as 10 to 15 log(speed/speed _{ref}).
	Vehicle Speed	50 mph	30 mph	
	60 mph	+1.6 dB	+6.0 dB	
	50 mph	0.0 dB	+4.4 dB	
	40 mph	-1.9 dB	+2.5 dB	
	30 mph	-4.4 dB	0.0 dB	
	20 mph	-8.0 dB	-3.5 dB	
Vehicle Parameters (not additive, apply greatest value only)				
Vehicle with stiff primary suspension	+8 dB			Transit vehicles with stiff primary suspensions have been shown to create high vibration levels. Include this adjustment when the primary suspension has a vertical resonance frequency greater than 15 Hz.
Resilient Wheels	0 dB			Resilient wheels do not generally affect ground-borne vibration except at frequencies greater than about 80 Hz.
Worn Wheels or Wheels with Flats	+10 dB			Wheel flats or wheels that are unevenly worn can cause high vibration levels. This can be prevented with wheel truing and slip-slide detectors to prevent the wheels from sliding on the track.
Track Conditions (not additive, apply greatest value only)				
Worn or Corrugated Track	+10 dB			If both the wheels and the track are worn, only one adjustment should be used. Corrugated track is a common problem. Mill scale on new rail can cause higher vibration levels until the rail has been in use for some time.
Special Trackwork	+10 dB			Wheel impacts at special trackwork will significantly increase vibration levels. The increase will be less at greater distances from the track.
Jointed Track or Uneven Road Surfaces	+5 dB			Jointed track can cause higher vibration levels than welded track. Rough roads or expansion joints are sources of increased vibration for rubber-tire transit.
Track Treatments (not additive, apply greatest value only)				
Floating Slab Trackbed	-15 dB			The reduction achieved with a floating slab trackbed is strongly dependent on the frequency characteristics of the vibration.
Ballast Mats	-10 dB			Actual reduction is strongly dependent on frequency of vibration.
High-Resilience Fasteners	-5 dB			Slab track with track fasteners that are very compliant in the vertical direction can reduce vibration at frequencies greater than 40 Hz.

Table 10-1. Adjustment Factors for Generalized Predictions of Ground-Borne Vibration and Noise (Continued)				
Factors Affecting Vibration Path				
Path Factor	Adjustment to Propagation Curve			Comment
Resiliently Supported Ties	-10 dB			Resiliently supported tie systems have been found to provide very effective control of low-frequency vibration.
Track Configuration (not additive, apply greatest value only)				
Type of Transit Structure	Relative to at-grade tie & ballast: Elevated structure -10 dB Open cut 0 dB			The general rule is the heavier the structure, the lower the vibration levels. Putting the track in cut may reduce the vibration levels slightly. Rock-based subways generate higher-frequency vibration.
	Relative to bored subway tunnel in soil: Station -5 dB Cut and cover -3 dB Rock-based -15 dB			
Ground-borne Propagation Effects				
Geologic conditions that promote efficient vibration propagation	Efficient propagation in soil +10 dB			Refer to the text for guidance on identifying areas where efficient propagation is possible.
	Propagation in rock layer	Dist.	Adjust.	The positive adjustment accounts for the lower attenuation of vibration in rock compared to soil. It is generally more difficult to excite vibrations in rock than in soil at the source.
		50 ft	+2 dB	
		100 ft	+4 dB	
		150 ft	+6 dB	
200 ft	+9 dB			
Coupling to building foundation	Wood Frame Houses	-5 dB		The general rule is the heavier the building construction, the greater the coupling loss.
	1-2 Story Masonry	-7 dB		
	3-4 Story Masonry	-10 dB		
	Large Masonry on Piles	-10 dB		
	Large Masonry on Spread Footings	-13 dB		
	Foundation in Rock	0 dB		
Factors Affecting Vibration Receiver				
Receiver Factor	Adjustment to Propagation Curve			Comment
Floor-to-floor attenuation	1 to 5 floors above grade:	-2 dB/floor		This factor accounts for dispersion and attenuation of the vibration energy as it propagates through a building.
	5 to 10 floors above grade:	-1 dB/floor		
Amplification due to resonances of floors, walls, and ceilings	+6 dB			The actual amplification will vary greatly depending on the type of construction. The amplification is lower near the wall/floor and wall/ceiling intersections.
Conversion to Ground-borne Noise				
Noise Level in dBA	Peak frequency of ground vibration:			Use these adjustments to estimate the A-weighted sound level given the average vibration velocity level of the room surfaces. See text for guidelines for selecting low, typical or high frequency characteristics. Use the high-frequency adjustment for subway tunnels in rock or if the dominant frequencies of the vibration spectrum are known to be 60 Hz or greater.
	Low frequency (<30 Hz):	-50 dB		
	Typical (peak 30 to 60 Hz):	-35 dB		
	High frequency (>60 Hz):	-20 dB		

Without careful consideration of the shape of the actual vibration spectra, an inappropriate vibration control measure may be selected that could actually cause an increase in the vibration levels.

The following guidelines are used to select the appropriate adjustment factors. Note that the adjustments for wheel and rail condition are not cumulative. The general rule-of-thumb to use when more than one adjustment may apply is to apply only the largest adjustment. For example: the adjustment for jointed track is 5 decibels and the adjustment for wheel flats is 10 decibels. In an area where there is jointed track and many vehicles have wheel flats, the projected vibration levels should be increased by 10 decibels, not 15 decibels.

- **Train Speed:** The levels of ground-borne vibration and noise vary approximately as 20 times the logarithm of speed. This means that doubling train speed will increase the vibration levels approximately 6 decibels and halving train speed will reduce the levels by 6 decibels. Table 10-1 tabulates the adjustments for reference vehicle speeds of 30 mph for rubber-tired vehicles and 50 mph for steel-wheel vehicles. The following relationship should be used to calculate the adjustments for other speeds.

$$adjustment(dB) = 20 \times \log \left(\frac{speed}{speed_{ref}} \right)$$

- **Vehicle:** The most important factors for the vehicles are the suspension system, wheel condition, and wheel type. Most new heavy rail and light rail vehicles have relatively soft primary suspensions. However, experience in Atlanta, New York, and other cities has demonstrated that a stiff primary suspension (vertical resonance frequency greater than 15 Hz) can result in higher than normal levels of ground-borne vibration. Vehicles for which the primary suspension consists of a rubber or neoprene "donut" around the axle bearing usually have a very stiff primary suspension with a vertical resonance frequency greater than 40 Hz.

Deteriorated wheel condition is another factor that will increase vibration levels. It can be assumed that a new system will have vehicles with wheels in good condition. However, when older vehicles will be used on new track, it may be appropriate to include an adjustment for wheel condition. The reference curves account for wheels without defects, but wheels with flats or corrugations can cause vibration levels that are 10 VdB higher than normal. Resilient wheels will reduce vibration levels at frequencies greater than the effective resonance frequency of the wheel. Because this resonance frequency is relatively high, often greater than 80 Hz, resilient wheels usually have only a marginal effect on ground-borne vibration.

It is important to use only one of the adjustments in this category, the greatest one that applies.

- **Track System and Support:** This category includes the type of rail (welded, jointed or special trackwork), the track support system, and the condition of the rail. The base curves all assume good-condition welded rail. Jointed rail causes higher vibration levels than welded rail; the amount higher depends on the condition of the joints. The wheel impacts at special trackwork, such as frogs at crossovers, create much higher vibration forces than normal. Because of the higher vibration levels at special trackwork, crossovers often end up being the principal areas of vibration impact on new systems. Modifying the track support system is one method of mitigating the vibration impact. Special track support systems such as ballast mats, high-resilience track fasteners, resiliently supported ties, and floating slabs have all been shown to be effective in reducing vibration levels.

The condition of the running surface of the rails can strongly affect vibration levels. Factors such as corrugations, general wear, or mill scale on new track can cause vibration levels that are 5 to 15 decibels higher than normal. Mill scale will usually wear off after some time in service; however, the track must be ground to remove corrugations or to reduce the roughness from wear.

Again, apply only one of the adjustments.

Roadway surfaces in the case of rubber-tired systems are assumed to be smooth. Rough washboard surfaces, bumps or uneven expansion joints are the types of running surface defects that cause increased vibration levels over the smooth road condition.

- **Transit Structure:** The weight and size of a transit structure affects the vibration radiated by that structure. The general rule-of-thumb is that vibration levels will be lower for heavier transit structures. Hence, the vibration levels from a cut-and-cover concrete double-box subway can be assumed to be lower than the vibration from a lightweight concrete-lined bored tunnel. The vibration from elevated structures is lower than from at-grade track because of the mass and damping of the structure and the extra distance that the vibration must travel before it reaches the receiver. Elevated structures in automated guideway transit applications sometimes are designed to bear on building elements. These are a special case and may require detailed design considerations.
- **Propagation Characteristics:** In the General Assessment it is necessary to make a selection among the general propagation characteristics. For a subway, the selection is a fairly straightforward choice of whether or not the subway will be founded in bedrock. Bedrock is considered to be hard rock. It is usually appropriate to consider soft siltstone and sandstone to be more similar to soil than hard rock. As seen in Table 10-1, whether the subway is founded in soil or rock can be a 15 VdB difference in the vibration levels.

When considering at-grade vibration sources, the selection is between "normal" vibration propagation and "efficient" vibration propagation. Efficient vibration propagation results in approximately 10 decibels higher vibration levels. This more than doubles the potential impact zone for ground-borne vibration. One of the problems with identifying the cause of efficient propagation is the difficulty in determining whether higher than normal vibration levels are due to geologic conditions or due to special source conditions (e.g. rail corrugations or wheel flats).

Although it is known that geologic conditions have a significant effect on the vibration levels, it is rarely possible to develop more than a broad-brush understanding of the vibration propagation

characteristics for a General Assessment. The conservative approach would be to use the 10-decibel adjustment for efficient propagation to evaluate all potential vibration impact. The problem with this approach is that it tends to greatly overstate the potential for vibration impact. Hence, it is best to review available geological data and any complaint history from existing transit lines and major construction sites near the transit corridor to identify areas where efficient propagation is possible. If there is any reason to suspect efficient propagation conditions, then a Detailed Analysis during final design would include vibration propagation tests at the areas identified as potentially efficient propagation sites.

Some geologic conditions are repeatedly associated with efficient propagation. Shallow bedrock, less than 30 feet below the surface, is likely to have efficient propagation. Other factors that can be important are soil type and stiffness. In particular, stiff clayey soils have sometimes been associated with efficient vibration propagation. Investigation of soil boring records can be used to estimate depth to bedrock and the presence of problem soil conditions.

A factor that can be particularly complex to address is the effect of vibration propagation through rock. There are three factors from Table 10-1 that need to be included when a subway structure will be founded in rock. First is the -15 decibel adjustment in the "Type of Transit Structure" category. Second is the adjustment based on the propagation distance in the "Geologic Conditions" category. This positive adjustment is applied to the distances shown in Figure 10-1; the adjustment increases with distance because vibration attenuates more slowly in rock than in the soil used as a basis for the reference curve. The third factor is in the "Coupling to Building" category. When a building foundation is directly on the rock layer, there is no "coupling loss" due to the weight and stiffness of the building. Use the standard coupling factors if there is at least a 10-foot layer of soil between the building foundation and the rock layer.

- **Type of Building and Receiver Location in Building:** Since annoyance from ground-borne vibration and noise is an indoor phenomenon, the effects of the building structure on the vibration must be considered. Wood frame buildings, such as the typical residential structure, are more easily excited by ground vibration than heavier buildings. In contrast, large masonry buildings with spread footings have a low response to ground vibration.

Vibration generally reduces in level as it propagates through a building. As indicated in Table 10-1, a 1- to 2-decibel attenuation per floor is usually assumed. Counteracting this, resonances of the building structure, particularly the floors, will cause some amplification of the vibration. Consequently, for a wood-frame structure, the building-related adjustments nearly cancel out. The adjustments for the first floor assuming a basement are: -5 decibels for the coupling loss; -2 decibels for the propagation from the basement to the first floor; and +6 decibels for the floor amplification. The total adjustment in this case is -1 decibel.

- **Vibration to Ground-Borne Noise Adjustment:** It is possible to estimate the levels of radiated noise given the average vibration amplitude of the room surfaces (floors, walls and ceiling), and the total acoustical absorption in the room. The unweighted sound pressure level is approximately equal to the vibration velocity level when the velocity level is referenced to 1×10^{-6} inches/second.

However, to estimate the A-weighted sound level from the velocity level, it is necessary to have some information about the frequency spectrum. The A-weighting adjustment drops rapidly at low frequencies, reflecting the relative insensitivity of human hearing to low frequencies. For example, A-weighting is -16 dB at 125 Hz, -26 dB at 60 Hz and -40 dB at 30 Hz. Table 10-1 provides adjustments for vibration depending on whether it has low-frequency, typical or high-frequency characteristics. Some general guidelines for classifying the frequency characteristics are:

- Low Frequency: Low-frequency vibration characteristics can be assumed for subways surrounded by cohesiveless sandy soil or whenever a vibration isolation track support system will be used. Low-frequency characteristics can be assumed for most surface track.
- Typical: The typical vibration characteristic is the default assumption for subways. It should be assumed for subways until there is information indicating that one of the other assumptions is appropriate. It should be used for surface track when the soil is very stiff with a high clay content.
- High Frequency: High-frequency characteristics should be assumed for subways whenever the transit structure is founded in rock or when there is very stiff clayey soil.

10.3 INVENTORY OF VIBRATION-IMPACTED LOCATIONS

This chapter includes generalized curves for surface vibration for different transit modes along with adjustments to apply for specific operating conditions and buildings. The projected levels are then compared with the criteria in Chapter 8 to determine whether vibration impact is likely. The results of the General Assessment are expressed in terms of an inventory of all sensitive land uses where either ground-borne vibration or ground-borne noise from the project may exceed the impact thresholds. The General Assessment may include a discussion of mitigation measures which would likely be needed to reduce vibration to acceptable levels.

The purpose of the procedure is to develop a reasonably complete inventory of the buildings that may experience ground-borne vibration or noise that exceed the impact criteria. At this point, it is preferable to make a conservative assessment of the impact. That is, it is better to include some buildings where ground-borne vibration may be below the impact threshold than to exclude buildings where it may exceed the impact threshold. The inventory should be organized according to the categories described in Chapter 8. For each building where the projected ground-borne vibration or noise exceeds the applicable impact threshold, one or more of the vibration control options from Section 11.5 should be considered for applicability. See Section 11.4 for a more complete description of how the General Vibration Assessment fits into the overall procedure.

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2. International Organization for Standardization, “Mechanical vibration – Ground-borne noise and vibration arising from rail systems,” ISO/FDIS 14837-1:2005.
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11. DETAILED VIBRATION ANALYSIS

The goal of the Detailed Analysis is to use all available tools to develop accurate projections of potential ground-borne vibration impact and, when necessary, to design mitigation measures. This is appropriate when the General Assessment has indicated impact and the project has entered the final design and engineering phase. It may also be appropriate to perform a Detailed Analysis at the outset when there are particularly sensitive land uses within the screening distances. Detailed Analysis will require developing estimates of the frequency components of the vibration signal, usually in terms of 1/3-octave-band spectra. Analytical techniques for solving vibration problems are complex and the technology continually advances. Consequently, the approach presented in this chapter focuses on the key steps usually taken by a professional in the field.

Three examples of cases where a Detailed Vibration Analysis might be required are:

Example 1: A particularly sensitive building such as a major concert hall is within the impact zone. A Detailed Analysis would ensure that effective vibration mitigation is feasible and economically reasonable.

Example 2: The General Assessment indicates that a proposed commuter rail project has the potential to create vibration impact for a large number of residential buildings adjacent to the alignment. The projections for many of the buildings exceed the impact threshold by less than 5 decibels, which means that more accurate projections may show that vibration levels will be below the impact criterion. Detailed Analysis will refine the impact assessment and help determine whether mitigation is needed.

Example 3: A transit alignment will be close to university research buildings where vibration-sensitive optical instrumentation is used. Vibration from the trains could make it impossible to continue using the building for this type of research. A Detailed Analysis would determine if it is possible to control the vibration from the trains such that sensitive instrumentation will not be affected.

A Detailed Vibration Analysis consists of three parts:

1. **Survey Existing Vibration.** Although knowledge of the existing levels of ground-borne vibration is not usually required for the assessment of vibration impact, there are times when a survey of the existing vibration is valuable. Examples include documenting existing background vibration at sensitive buildings, measuring the vibration levels created by sources such as existing rail lines, and, in some cases, characterizing the general background vibration in the project corridor. Characterizing the existing vibration is discussed in Section 11.1.
2. **Predict Future Vibration and Vibration Impact.** All of the available tools should be applied in a Detailed Analysis to develop the best possible estimates of the potential for vibration impact. Section 11.2 discusses an approach to projecting ground-borne vibration that involves performing tests to characterize vibration propagation at sites where significant impact is probable. Section 11.3 describes the vibration propagation test procedure and Section 11.4 discusses the assessment of vibration impact.
3. **Develop Mitigation Measures.** Controlling the impact from ground-borne vibration requires developing cost-effective measures to reduce the vibration levels. The Detailed Analysis helps to select practical vibration control measures that will be effective at the dominant vibration frequencies and compatible with the given transit structure and track support system. Vibration mitigation measures are discussed in Section 11.5.

The discussion in this chapter generally assumes that detailed vibration analysis applies to a steel-wheel/rail system. The procedures could be adapted to bus systems. However, this is rarely necessary because vibration problems are very infrequent with rubber-tired transit.

11.1 CHARACTERIZING EXISTING VIBRATION CONDITIONS

Environmental vibration is rarely of sufficient magnitude to be perceptible or cause audible ground-borne noise unless there is a specific vibration source close by, such as a rail line. In most cases, feelable vibration inside a building is caused by equipment or activities within the building itself, such as heating and ventilation systems, footsteps or doors closing. Because the existing environmental vibration is usually below human perception, a limited vibration survey is sufficient even for a Detailed Analysis. This contrasts with analysis of noise impact where documenting the existing ambient noise level is required to assess the impact.

Examples of situations where measurements of the ambient vibration are valuable include:

- **Determining existing vibration at sensitive buildings:** Serious vibration impact may occur when there are vibration-sensitive manufacturing, research, or laboratory activities within the screening distances. Careful documentation of the pre-existing vibration provides valuable information on the

real sensitivity of the activity to external vibration and gives a reference condition under which vibration is not a problem.

- **Using existing vibration sources to characterize propagation:** Existing vibration sources such as freight trains, industrial processes, quarrying operations, or normal traffic sometimes can be used to characterize vibration propagation. Carefully designed and performed measurements may eliminate the need for more complex propagation tests.
- **Documenting existing levels of general background:** Some measurements of the existing levels of background vibration can be useful simply to document that, as expected, the vibration is below the normal threshold of human perception. Existing vibration in urban and suburban areas is usually due to traffic. If a measurement site has existing vibration approaching the range of human perception (e.g., the maximum vibration velocity levels are greater than about 65 VdB), then this site should be carefully evaluated for the possibility of efficient vibration propagation. Areas with efficient vibration propagation could have vibration problems when the project is built.
- **Documenting vibration from existing rail lines:** Measurements to document the levels of vibration created by existing rail lines can be important in evaluating the impact of the new vibration source and determining vibration propagation characteristics in the area. As discussed in Chapter 8, if vibration from an existing rail line will be higher than that from the proposed transit trains, there may not be impact even though the normal impact criterion would be exceeded.

Although ground-borne vibration is almost exclusively a problem inside buildings, measurements of existing ambient vibration generally should be performed outdoors. Two important reasons for this are: (1) equipment inside the building may cause more vibration than exterior sources, and (2) the building structure and the resonances of the building can have strong, but difficult to predict, effects on the vibration. However, there are some cases where measurements of indoor vibration are important. Documenting the vibration levels inside a vibration-sensitive building can be particularly important since equipment and activities inside the building sometimes cause vibration greater than that due to external sources such as street traffic or aircraft overflights. Floor vibration measurements are taken near the center of a floor span where the vibration amplitudes are the highest.

The goal of most ambient vibration tests is to characterize the root mean square (rms) vertical vibration velocity level at the ground surface. In almost all cases it is sufficient to measure only vertical vibration and ignore the transverse components of the vibration. Although transverse components can transmit significant vibration energy into a building, the vertical component usually has greater amplitudes than transverse vibration. Moreover, vertical vibration is usually transmitted more efficiently into building foundations than transverse vibration.

The manner in which a transducer is mounted can affect the measured levels of ground-borne vibration. However, at the frequencies usually of concern for ground-borne vibration (less than about 200 Hz), straightforward methods of mounting transducers on the ground surface or on pavement are adequate for vertical vibration measurements. Quick-drying epoxy or beeswax is often used to mount transducers to smooth paved surfaces or to metal stakes driven into the ground. Rough concrete or rock surfaces require

special mountings. One approach is to use a liberal base of epoxy to attach small aluminum blocks to the surface and then mount the transducers on the aluminum blocks.

Selecting sites for an ambient vibration survey requires good common sense. Sites selected to characterize a transit corridor should be distributed along the entire project and should be representative of the types of vibration environments found in the corridor. This would commonly include:

- measurements in quiet residential areas removed from major traffic arterials to characterize low-ambient vibrations;
- measurements along major traffic arterials and highways or freeways to characterize high-vibration areas;
- measurements in any area with vibration-sensitive activities; and
- measurements at any significant existing source of vibration such as railroad lines.

The transducers should be located near the building setback line for background vibration measurements. Ambient measurements along railroad lines ideally will include: multiple sites; several distances from the rail line at each site; and 4 to 10 train passbys for each test. Because of the irregular schedule for freight trains and the low number of operations each day, it is often impractical to perform tests at more than two or three sites along the rail line or to measure more than two or three passbys at each site. Rail type and condition strongly affect the vibration levels. Consequently, it is important to inspect the track at each measurement site to locate any switches, bad rail joints, corrugations, or other factors that could be responsible for higher than normal vibration levels.

The appropriate methods of characterizing ambient vibration are dependent on the type of information required for the analysis. Following are some examples:

- **Ambient Vibration:** Ambient vibration is usually characterized with a continuous 10- to 30-minute measurement of vibration. The L_{eq} of the vibration velocity level over the measurement period gives an indication of the average vibration energy. L_{eq} is equivalent to a long averaging time rms level. Specific events can be characterized by the maximum rms level (L_{max}) of the event or by performing a statistical analysis of rms levels over the measurement period. An rms averaging time of 1 second should be used for statistical analysis of the vibration level.
- **Specific Events:** Specific events such as train passbys should be characterized by the rms level during the time that the train passes by. If the locomotives have vibration levels more than 5 dB higher than the passenger or freight cars, a separate rms level for the locomotives should be obtained. The locomotives can usually be characterized by the L_{max} during the train passby. The rms averaging time or time constant should be 1 second when determining L_{max} . Sometimes it is adequate to use L_{max} to characterize the train passby, which is simpler to obtain than the rms averaged over the entire train passby.
- **Spectral Analysis:** When the vibration data will be used to characterize vibration propagation or for other special analysis, a spectral analysis of the vibration is required. An example would be if

vibration transmission of the ground is suspected of having particular frequency characteristics. For many analyses, 1/3-octave band charts are best for describing vibration behavior. Narrowband spectra also can be valuable, particularly for identifying pure tones and designing specific mitigation measures.

Note that it is preferable that ambient vibration be characterized in terms of the root mean square (rms) velocity level, not the peak particle velocity (ppv) as is commonly used to monitor construction vibration. As discussed in Chapter 7, rms velocity is considered more appropriate than ppv for describing human response to building vibration.

11.2 VIBRATION PREDICTION PROCEDURE

Predicting ground-borne vibration associated with a transportation project continues to be a developing field. Because ground-borne vibration is a complex phenomenon that is difficult to model and predict accurately, most projection procedures that have been used for transit projects rely on empirical data. The procedure described in this section is based on site-specific tests of vibration propagation. Developed under an FTA-funded research contract,⁽¹⁾ this procedure is recommended for detailed evaluations of ground-borne vibration. There have been other approaches to a prediction procedure including some that use pure numerical methods. For example, approaches using finite elements are being used to estimate ground-borne vibration from subway tunnels, but most numerical approaches are still in the early stages of development.

11.2.1 Overview of Prediction Procedure

The prediction method described in this section was developed to allow the use of data collected in one location to accurately predict vibration levels in another site where the geologic conditions may be completely different. The procedure is based on using a special measured function, called *transfer mobility*. Transfer mobility measured at an existing transit system is used to normalize ground-borne vibration data and remove the effects of geology. The normalized vibration is referred to as the force density. The force density can be combined with transfer mobility measurements at sensitive sites along a new project to develop projections of future ground-borne vibration.

Transfer mobility represents the relationship between a vibration source that excites the ground and the resulting vibration of the ground surface. It is a function of both frequency and distance from the source. The transfer mobility between two points completely defines the composite vibration propagation characteristics between the two points. In most practical cases, receivers are close enough to the train tracks that the vibration cannot be considered to be originating from a single point. The vibration source must be modeled as a line-source. Consequently, the point transfer mobility must be modified to account for a line-source. In the following text, TM_{point} is used to indicate the measured point-source transfer mobility and TM_{line} is used for the line-source transfer mobility derived from TM_{point} .

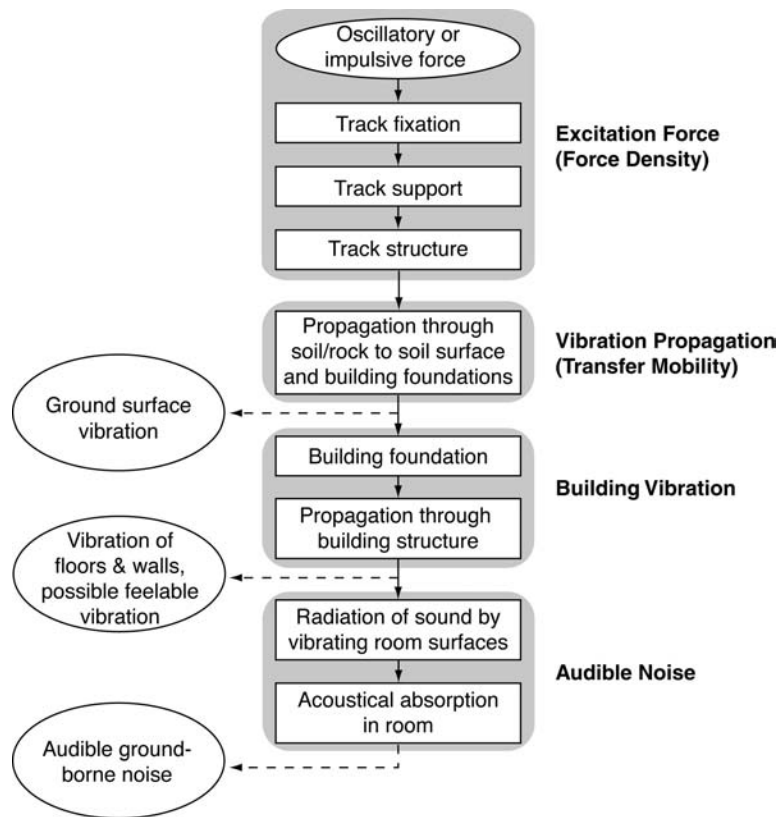


Figure 11-1. Block Diagram of Ground-Borne Vibration and Noise Model

The prediction procedure considers ground-borne vibration to be divided into several basic components as shown schematically in Figure 11-1. The components are:

- 1. Excitation Force.** The vibration energy is created by oscillatory and impulsive forces. Steel wheels rolling on smooth steel rails create random oscillatory forces. When a wheel encounters a discontinuity such as a rail joint, an impulsive force is created. The force excites the transit structure, such as the subway tunnel, or the ballast for at-grade track. In the prediction method, the combination of the actual force generated at the wheel/rail interface and the vibration of the transit structure are usually combined into an equivalent force density level. The force density level describes the force that excites the soil/rock surrounding the transit structure.
- 2. Vibration Propagation.** The vibration of the transit structure causes vibration waves in the soil that propagate away from the transit structure. The vibration energy can propagate through the soil or rock in a variety of wave forms. All ground vibration includes shear and compression waves. In addition, Rayleigh waves, which propagate along the ground surface, can be a major carrier of vibration energy. The mathematical modeling of vibration is complicated when, as is usually the case, there are soil strata with different elastic properties. As indicated in Figure 11-1, the

propagation through the soil/rock is modeled using the transfer mobility, which is usually determined experimentally.

The combination of the force density level and the transfer mobility is used to predict the ground-surface vibration. Here is the essential difference between the General and Detailed approaches: the projection process is simplified in a General Assessment by going directly to generalized estimates of the ground-surface vibration.

3. **Building Vibration.** When the ground vibration excites a building foundation, it sets the building into vibration motion and starts vibration waves propagating throughout the building structure. The interaction between the ground and the foundation causes some reduction in vibration levels. The amount of reduction is dependent on the mass and stiffness of the foundation. The more massive the foundation, the lower the response to ground vibration. As the vibration waves propagate through the building, they can create feelable vibration and can cause annoying rattling of windows and decorative items either hanging or on shelves.
4. **Audible Noise.** In addition to feelable vibration, the vibration of room surfaces radiates low-frequency sound that may be audible. As indicated in Figure 11-1, the sound level is affected by the amount of acoustical absorption in the receiver room.

A fundamental assumption of the prediction approach outlined here is that the force density, transfer mobility, and the building coupling to the ground are all independent factors. The following equations are the basis for the prediction procedure where all of the quantities are one-third octave band spectral levels in decibels with consistent reference values:

$$L_v = L_F + TM_{line} + C_{build}$$

$$L_A = L_v + K_{rad} + K_{A-wt}$$

where:

L_v = rms vibration velocity level,

L_A = A-weighted sound level,

L_F = force density for a line vibration source such as a train,

TM_{line} = line-source transfer mobility from the tracks to the sensitive site,

C_{build} = adjustments to account for ground–building foundation interaction and attenuation of vibration amplitudes as vibration propagates through buildings,

K_{rad} = adjustment to account for conversion from vibration to sound pressure level including accounting for the amount of acoustical absorption inside the room (A value of zero can be used for K_{rad} for typical residential rooms when the decibel reference value for L_v is 1 micro in./sec.⁽¹⁾),

K_{A-wt} = A-weighting adjustment at the 1/3-octave band center frequency.

All of the quantities given above are functions of frequency. The standard approach to dealing with the frequency dependence is to develop projections on a 1/3-octave band basis using the average values for each 1/3-octave band. The end results of the analysis are the 1/3-octave band spectra of the ground-borne vibration and the ground-borne noise. The spectra are then applied to the vibration criteria for Detailed Analysis. The A-weighted ground-borne noise level can be calculated from the vibration spectrum. This more detailed approach is in contrast to the General Assessment where the overall vibration velocity level and A-weighted sound level are predicted without any consideration of the particular frequency characteristics of the propagation path.

11.2.2 Major Steps in Detailed Analysis

The major steps in performing a Detailed Analysis are intended to obtain quantities for the equations given above. These are:

1. Develop estimates of the force density. The estimate of force density can be based on previous measurements or a special test program can be designed to measure the force density at an existing facility. If no suitable measurements are available, testing should be done at a transit facility with equipment similar to the planned vehicles. Adjustments for factors such as train speed, track support system, and vehicle suspension may be needed to match the force density to the conditions at a specific site. Some appropriate adjustments can be found in the report "State-of- the-Art Review: Prediction and Control of Ground-Borne Noise and Vibration from Rail Transit Trains."⁽²⁾
2. Measure the point-source transfer mobility at representative sites. The transfer mobility is a function of both frequency and distance from the source. Point-source transfer mobility is used for sources with short lengths, such as single vehicles or columns supporting elevated structures.
3. Use numerical integration to estimate a line-source transfer mobility from the point-source transfer mobilities. Line-source transfer mobility is applicable to long sources like trains.
4. Combine force density and line-source transfer mobility to project ground-surface vibration.
5. Add adjustment factors to estimate the building response to the ground-surface vibration and to estimate the A-weighted sound level inside buildings.

The two key elements of the transfer mobility procedure are a measured force function that represents the vibration energy put into the ground and a measured transfer mobility that characterizes the propagation of the vibration from the source to the receiver. The unit of force density is force divided by square root of train length, represented here in decibels relative to $1 \text{ lb}/(\text{ft})^{1/2}$. The force density represents an incoherent line of vibration force equal to the length of transit trains. The process of estimating force density from train vibration and transfer mobility tests is discussed in Section 11.3. Figure 11-2 shows some trackbed force densities that have been developed from measurements of vibration from heavy and light rail transit vehicles. This figure provides a comparison of the vibration forces from heavy commuter trains and light rail transit vehicles with different types of primary suspensions illustrating the range of vibration forces commonly experienced in a transit system. A force density of a vehicle includes the characteristics of its track support system at the measurement site. Adjustments must be made to the force density to account for differences between the facility where the force density was measured and the new system being analyzed.

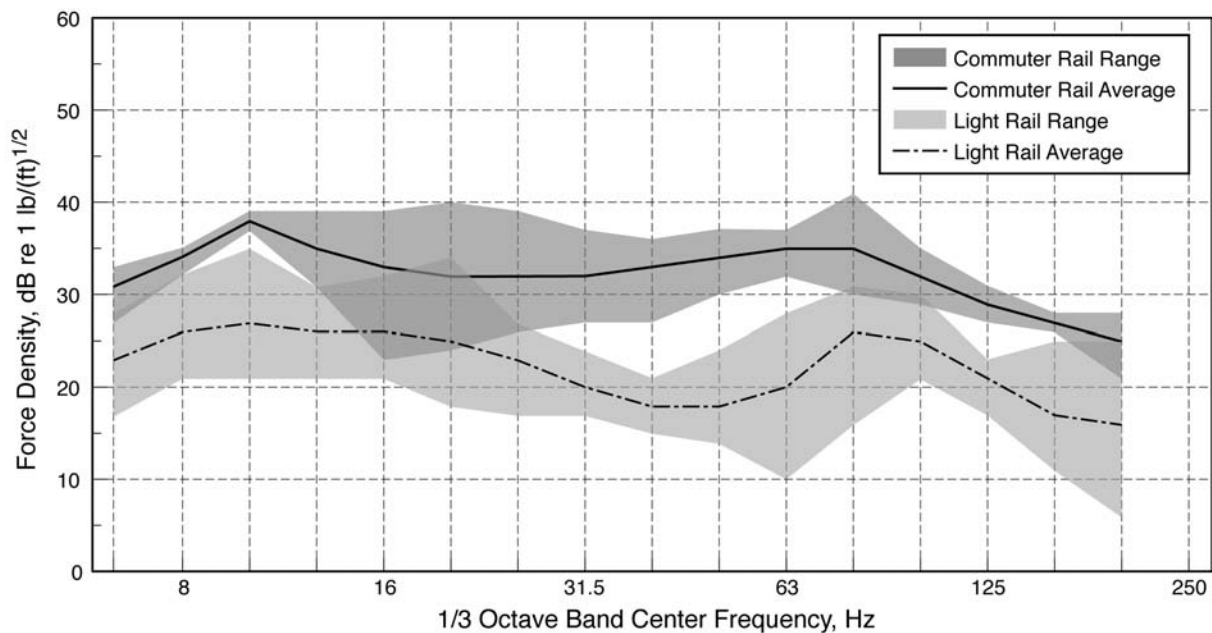


Figure 11-2. Typical Force Densities for Rail Transit Vehicles, 40 mph

The key elements of the vibration prediction procedure are implementation of field tests to measure the transfer mobility and the subsequent use of transfer mobility to characterize vibration propagation. The process of measuring transfer mobility involves impacting the ground and measuring the resulting vibration pulse at various distances from the impact. Standard signal-processing techniques are used to determine the transfer function, or frequency response function, between the exciting force and the resultant ground-surface vibration. Numerical regression methods are used to combine a number of two-point transfer functions into a smooth point-source transfer mobility that represents the average vibration propagation characteristics of a site as a function of both distance from the source and frequency. The transfer mobility is usually expressed in terms of a group of 1/3-octave band transfer mobilities. This processing is performed after transferring the data to a computer. Figure 11-3 shows the point-source transfer mobilities from a series of tests at the Transportation Technology Center in Pueblo, Colorado.^(3,4,5,6)

Once the point-source transfer mobility has been defined, the line-source transfer mobility can be calculated using numerical integration techniques. This process has been described in a Transportation Research Board paper.⁽¹⁾ Figure 11-4 shows the line-source transfer mobilities that were derived from the point-source transfer mobilities shown in Figure 11-3. The line-source transfer mobilities are used to normalize measured vibration velocity levels from train passbys and to obtain force density.

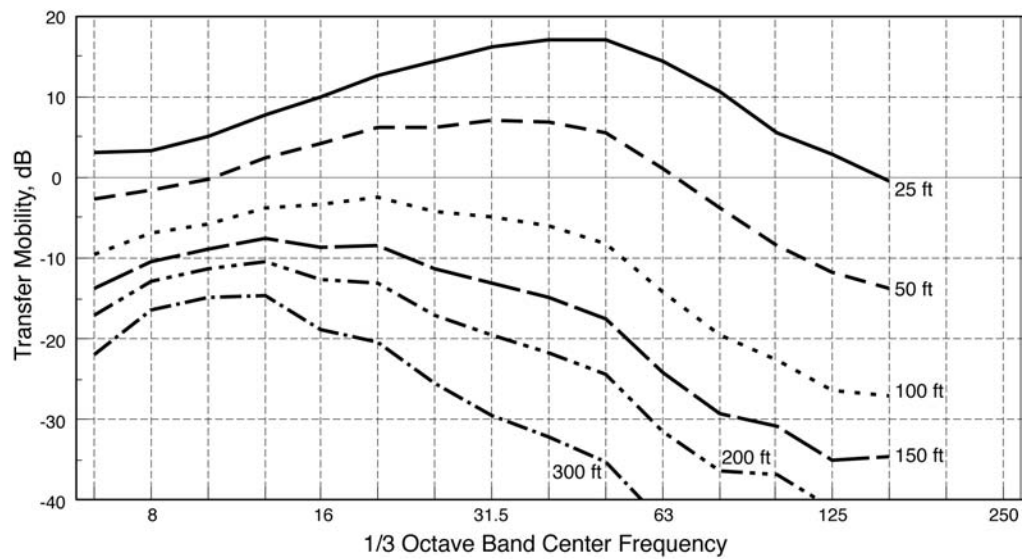


Figure 11-3. Example of Point-Source Transfer Mobility

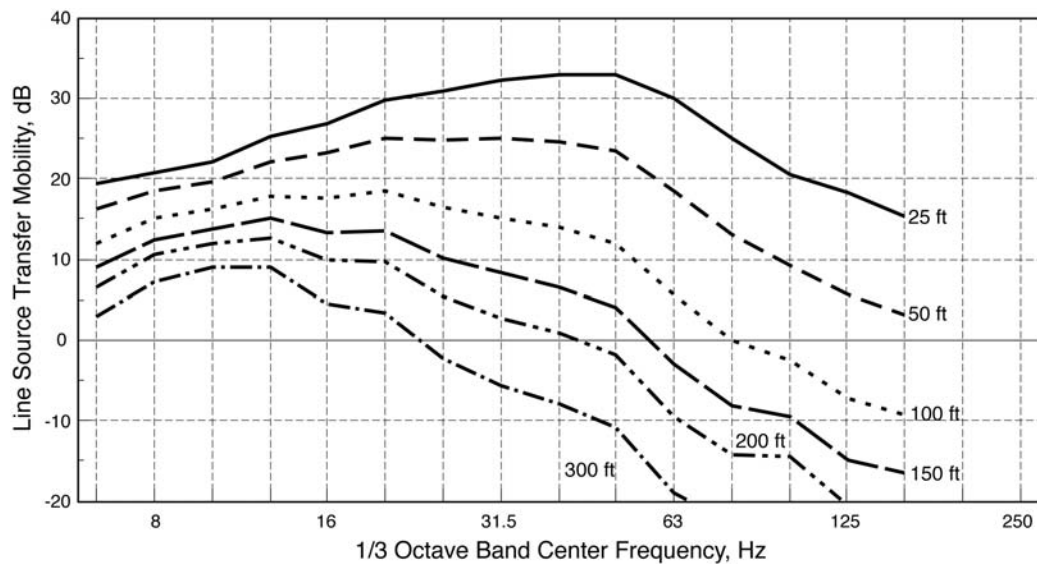


Figure 11-4. Example of Line-Source Transfer Mobility

The propagation of vibration from the building foundation to the receiver room is a very complex problem dependent on the specific design of the building. Detailed evaluation of the vibration propagation would require extensive use of numerical procedures such as the finite element method. Such a detailed evaluation is generally not practical for individual buildings considered in this manual. The propagation of vibration through a building and the radiation of sound by vibrating building surfaces is consequently estimated using simple empirical or theoretical models. The recommended procedures are outlined in the *Handbook of Urban Rail Noise and Vibration Control*.⁽⁷⁾ The approach consists of adding the following adjustments to the 1/3-octave band spectrum of the projected ground-surface vibration:

1. **Building response or coupling loss.** This represents the change in the incident ground-surface vibration due to the presence of the building foundation. The adjustments in the *Handbook*, are shown in Figure 11-5. Note that the correction is zero when estimating basement floor vibration or vibration of at-grade slabs. Measured values may be used in place of these generic adjustments.
2. **Transmission through the building.** The vibration amplitude typically decreases as the vibration energy propagates from the foundation through the remainder of the building. The normal assumption is that vibration attenuates by 1 to 2 dB for each floor.
3. **Floor resonances.** Vibration amplitudes will be amplified because of resonances of the floor/ceiling systems. For a typical wood-frame residential structure, the fundamental resonance is usually in the 15- to 20-Hz range. Reinforced-concrete slab floors in modern buildings will have fundamental resonance frequencies in the 20- to 30- Hz range. An amplification resulting in a gain of approximately 6 dB should be used in the frequency range of the fundamental resonance.

The projected floor vibration is used to estimate the levels of ground-borne noise. The primary factors affecting noise level are the average vibration level of the room surfaces and the amount of acoustical absorption within the room. As discussed above, the radiation adjustment is zero for typical rooms, which gives:

$$L_A \approx L_v + K_{A-wt}$$

where L_A is the A-weighted sound level in a 1/3-octave band, L_v is the vibration velocity level in that band, and K_{A-wt} is the A-weighting adjustment at the center frequency of the 1/3-octave band. The A-weighted levels in the 1/3-octave bands are then combined to give the overall A-weighted sound level.

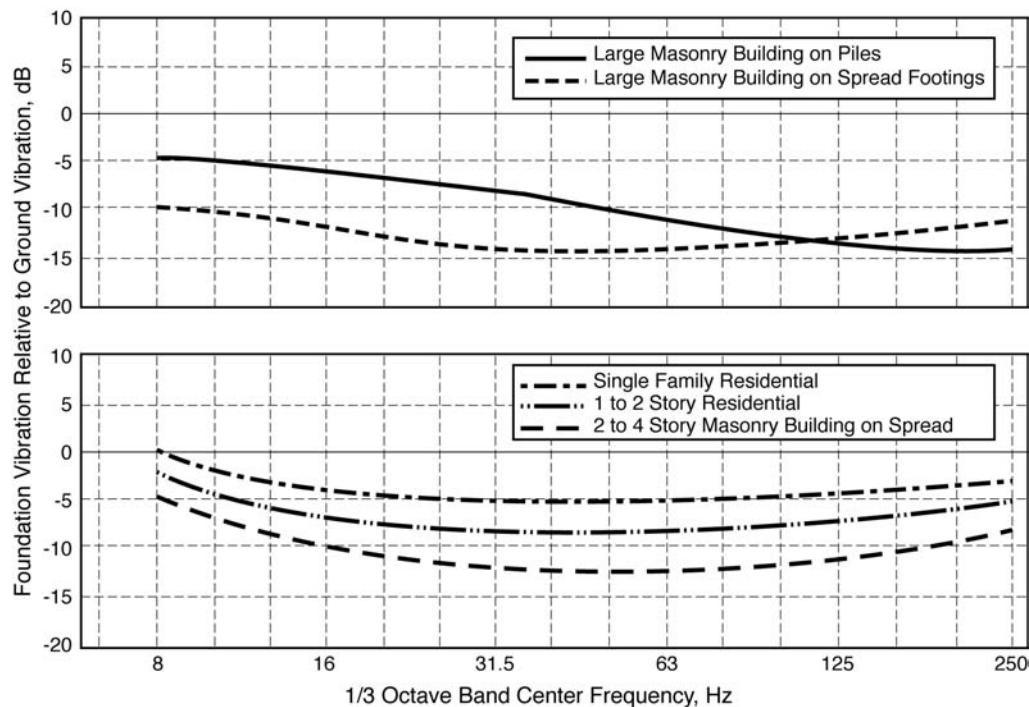


Figure 11-5. Foundation Response for Various Types of Buildings

11.3 MEASURING TRANSFER MOBILITY AND FORCE DENSITY

The test procedure to measure transfer mobility basically consists of dropping a heavy weight on the ground and measuring the force into the ground and the response at several distances from the impact. The goal of the test is to create vibration pulses that travel from the source to the receiver using the same path that will be taken by the transit system vibration. The transfer mobility expresses the relationship between the input force and the ground-surface vibration.

Figure 11-6 illustrates the field procedure for at-grade and subway testing of transfer mobility. A weight is dropped from a distance of 3 to 4 feet onto a force transducer. The responses of the force and vibration transducers are recorded on a multichannel tape recorder for later analysis in the laboratory. An alternative approach is to set up the analysis equipment in the field and capture the signals directly. This complicates the field testing but eliminates the laboratory analysis of tape-recorded data.

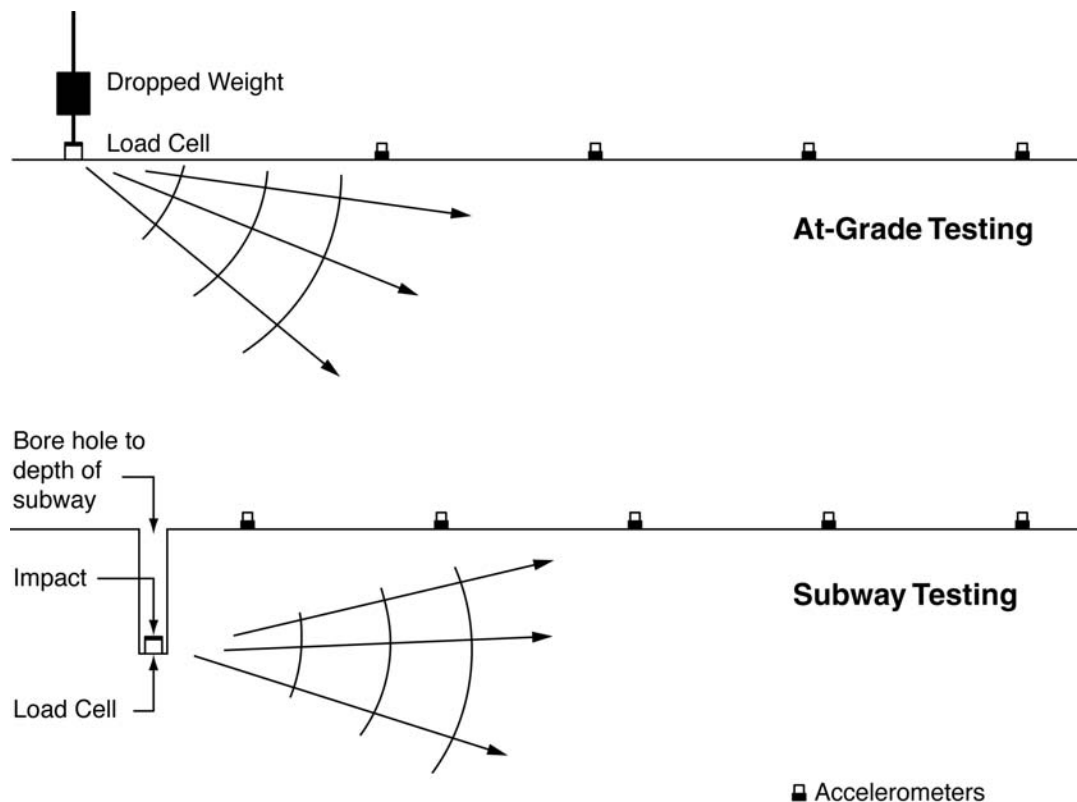


Figure 11-6. Test Configuration for Measuring Transfer Mobility

When the procedure is applied to subways, the force must be located at the approximate depth of the subway. This is done by drilling a bore hole and locating the force transducer at the bottom of the hole. The tests are usually performed at the same time that the bore holes are drilled. This allows using the soil-sampling equipment on the drill rig for the transfer mobility testing. The force transducer is attached to the bottom of the drill string and lowered to the bottom of the hole. A standard soil sampling hammer, which is usually a 140-pound weight dropped 18 inches onto a collar attached to the drill string, is used to excite the ground. The force transducer must be capable of operating under water if the water table is near the surface or a slurry drilling process is used.

11.3.1 Instrumentation

Performing a transfer mobility test requires specialized equipment. Most of the equipment is readily available from commercial sources. A load cell can be used as the force transducer. The force transducer should be capable of impact loads of 5,000 to 10,000 pounds. For borehole testing, the load cell must be hermetically sealed and capable of being used at the bottom of a 30- to 100-foot-deep hole partially filled with water. Typical instrumentation for the field-testing and laboratory analysis of transfer mobility is shown in Figure 11-7. Either accelerometers or geophones can be used as the vibration transducers. The

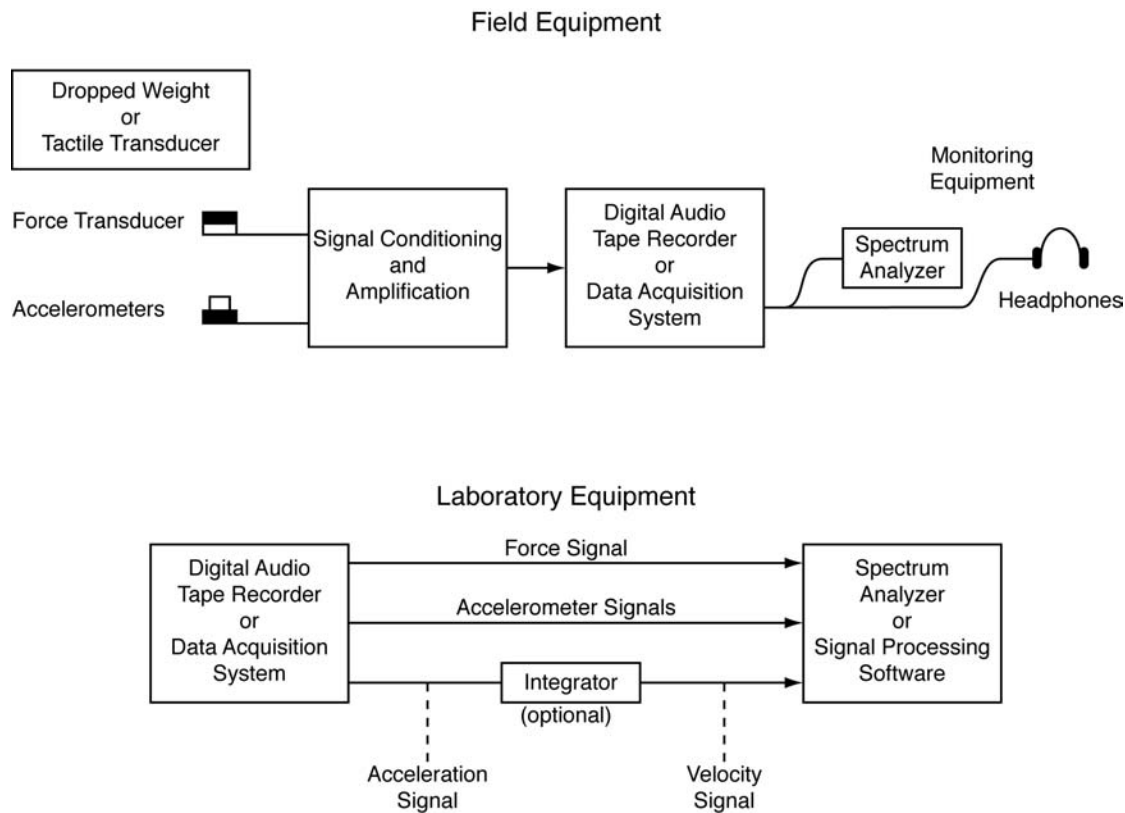


Figure 11-7. Equipment Required for Field Testing and Laboratory Analysis

requirement is that the transducers with the associated amplifiers be capable of accurately measuring levels of 0.0001 in./sec at 40 Hz and have a flat frequency response from 6 Hz to 400 Hz. Data must be acquired (either with digital audio tape or an alternative digital acquisition system) with a flat frequency response over the range of 6 to 400 Hz.

A narrowband spectrum analyzer or signal-processing software can be used to calculate the transfer function and coherence between the force and vibration data. The analyzer must be capable of capturing impulses from at least two channels to calculate the frequency spectrum of the transfer function between the force and vibration channels. All transfer functions should include the average of at least 20 impulses. The averaging of the impulses will provide significant signal enhancement, which is usually required to accurately characterize the transfer function. Signal enhancement is particularly important when the vibration transducer is more than 100 feet from the impact.

Transfer mobility may also be measured using other methods. One such method involves producing maximum-length sequence (MLS) force impulses with a tactile transducer. Signal-processing software is then used to calculate the transfer function from the MLS forces and measured vibrations. The MLS measurement method uses a pseudo-random binary sequence as the signal and has the advantage of increasing the signal-to-noise ratio of the measurement.

The laboratory equipment in Figure 11-7 shows using either a spectrum analyzer or signal-processing software to calculate the transfer function. Specialized multi-channel spectrum analyzers have built-in capabilities for computing transfer functions. The use of a spectrum analyzer has the advantage of being computationally efficient. On the other hand, signal-processing software can offer more flexibility in analyzing data signals and allows the use of different digital signal processing methods such as the MLS. Typical measurement programs involve acquisition of data in the field and later processing of the information in a laboratory. However, recent advances in instrumentation and signal-processing software allow data to be collected and analyzed while in the field.

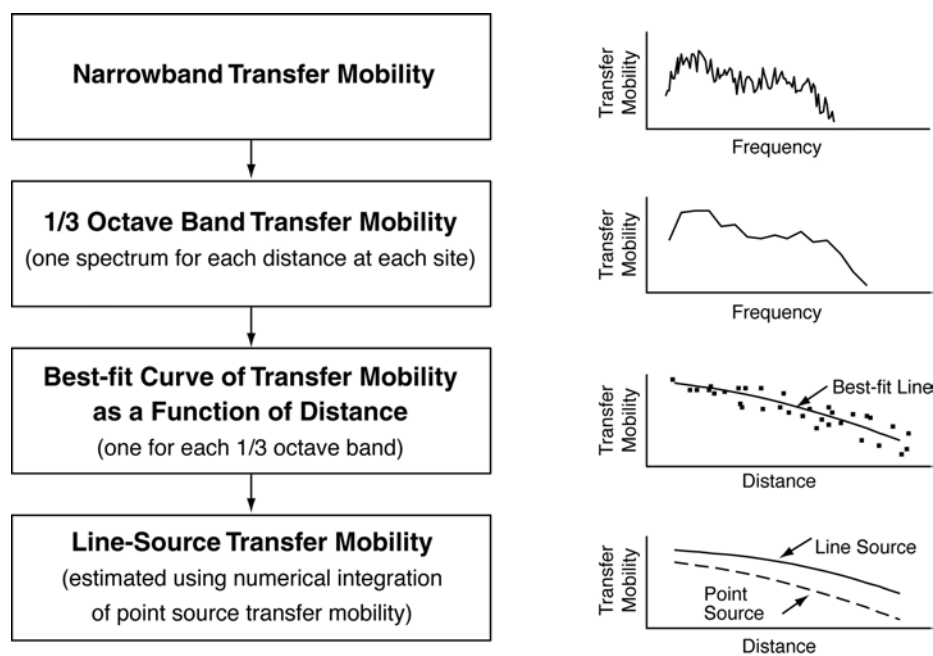


Figure 11-8. Analysis of Transfer Mobility

11.3.2 Analysis of Transfer Mobility Data

Two different approaches have been used to develop estimates of line-source transfer mobility. The first consists of using lines of transducers and the second consists of a line of impact positions. The steps to develop line-source transfer mobility curves from tests using one or more lines of transducers are shown in Figure 11-8. The procedure starts with the narrowband transfer function between source and receiver at each measurement position. There should be a minimum of four distances in any test line. Because of the possibility of local variations in propagation characteristics, if at all possible, two or more lines should be used to characterize a site. A total of 10 to 20 transducer positions are often used to characterize a site.

The first step in the analysis procedure is to calculate the equivalent 1/3-octave band transfer functions. This reduces each spectrum to 15 numbers. As shown in Figure 11-8, the 1/3-octave band spectrum is much smoother than the narrowband spectrum. The next step is to calculate a best-fit curve of transfer

mobility as a function of distance for each 1/3-octave band. When analyzing a specific site, the best-fit curve will be based on 10 to 20 points. Up to several hundred points could be used to determine average best-fit curves for a number of sites.

The 1/3-octave band best-fit curves can be directly applied to point vibration sources. Buses can usually be considered to be point-sources, as can columns supporting elevated structures. However, for a line vibration source such as a train, numerical integration must be used to calculate an equivalent line-source transfer mobility. The numerical integration procedures are detailed in Reference 1.

The second procedure for estimating line-source transfer mobility, shown schematically in Figure 11-9, is best for detailed assessment of specific vibration paths or specific buildings. The vibration transducers are located at specific points of interest and a line of impacts is used. For example, a 165-foot train might be represented by a line of 11 impact positions along the track centerline at 15-foot intervals. It is possible to sum the point-source results using Simpson's rule for numerical integration to directly calculate line-source transfer mobility. This is a considerably more direct approach than is possible with lines of vibration transducers.

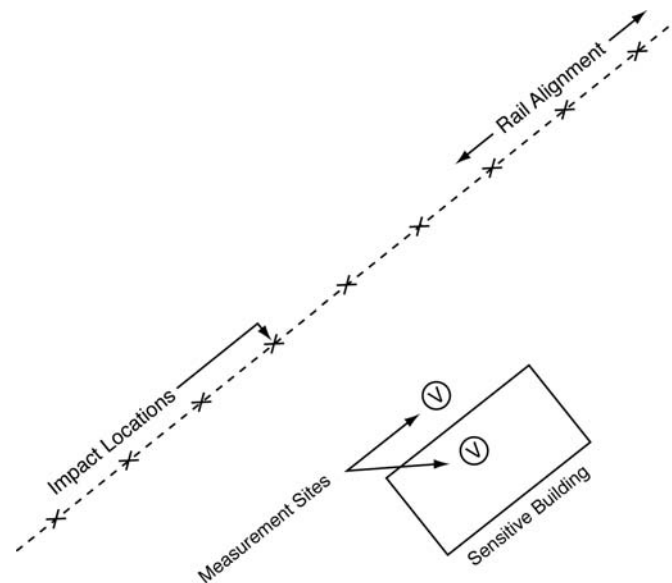


Figure 11-9. Schematic of Transfer Mobility Measurements Using a Line of Impacts

11.3.3 Deriving Force Density

Force Density is not a quantity that can be measured directly; it must be inferred from measurements of transfer mobility and train vibration at the same site. For deriving force density, the best results are achieved by deriving line-source transfer mobility from a line of impacts. The force density for each 1/3-octave band is then simply:

$$L_F = L_v - TM_{line}$$

where L_F is the force density, L_v is measured train ground-borne vibration, and TM_{line} is the line-source transfer mobility. The standard approach is to use the average force density from measurements at three or more positions.

11.4 ASSESSMENT OF VIBRATION IMPACT

The goals of the vibration assessment are to inventory all sensitive land uses that may be adversely impacted by the ground-borne vibration and noise from the proposed project and to determine the mitigation measures that will be required to eliminate or minimize the impact. This requires projecting the levels of ground-borne vibration and noise, comparing the projections with the impact criteria, and developing a list of suitable mitigation measures. Note that the General Assessment is incorporated as an intermediate step in the impact assessment because of its relative simplicity and potential to narrow the areas where Detailed Analysis needs to be done.

The assessment of vibration impact should proceed according to the following steps:

1. Screen the entire proposed transit alignment to identify areas where there is the potential of impact from ground-borne vibration. The vibration screening procedure is described in Chapter 9. If no sensitive land uses are within the screening distances, it is not necessary to perform any further assessment of ground-borne vibration.
2. Define the curves of ground-surface vibration level as a function of distance that can be used with the General Assessment. Usually this will mean selecting the appropriate curve from Chapter 10 for the proposed transit mode. For less common transit modes, it may be necessary to make measurements at an existing facility.
3. Use the General Assessment procedure to estimate vibration levels for specific buildings or groups of buildings. The projected levels are compared with the impact criteria for General Vibration Assessment (Tables 8-1 and 8-2) to determine whether vibration impact is likely. The goal of this step is to develop a reasonably accurate catalog of the buildings that will experience ground-borne vibration or noise levels that exceed the criteria. Applying the impact criteria for the General Assessment will result in a conservative assessment of the impact. That is, it is possible that some buildings that are identified as impacted may not be impacted under a more detailed analysis. However, at this stage it is better to include some buildings that may not be impacted than to

exclude some buildings that are likely to be impacted. In locations where the General Assessment indicates impact, the more refined techniques of Detailed Analysis would be employed.

4. In some cases it will be necessary to perform a vibration survey to characterize existing ambient vibration. As discussed in Section 11.1, although knowledge of the existing ambient vibration is not generally required to evaluate vibration impact, there are times when a survey of existing conditions is valuable. One common example is when a rail transit project will be located in an existing railroad right-of-way shared by freight trains. Chapter 8 includes some guidelines on how to account for existing vibration that is higher than the impact limit for the project vibration.
5. For areas where the General Assessment impact criteria are exceeded, review potential mitigation measures and assemble a list of feasible approaches to vibration control. To be feasible, the measure, or combination of measures, must be capable of providing a significant reduction of the vibration levels, at least 5 dB, while being reasonable from the standpoint of the added cost. The impact assessment and review of mitigation measures are preliminary at this point because vibration control is frequency-dependent, and specific recommendations of vibration control measures can be made only after evaluating the frequency characteristics of the vibration.
6. Use the Detailed Vibration Analysis to refine the impact assessment and to develop detailed vibration mitigation measures where needed. It is usually necessary to project vibration spectra at buildings which will be affected at levels higher than the impact thresholds (refer to Section 8.2). This type of assessment is normally performed as part of final design rather than during the environmental impact assessment stage. Because a Detailed Analysis is more accurate than a General Assessment, there will be times that the Detailed Analysis will show that the ground-borne vibration and noise levels will be below the applicable criteria and that mitigation is not required. If the projected levels are still above the limits, the spectra provided by the Detailed Analysis will be needed to evaluate vibration control approaches.

11.5 VIBRATION MITIGATION

The purpose of vibration mitigation is to minimize the adverse effects that the project ground-borne vibration will have on sensitive land uses. Because ground-borne vibration is not as common a problem as environmental noise, the mitigation approaches have not been as well defined. In some cases it has been necessary to develop innovative approaches to control the impact. Among the successful examples are the floating-slab systems that were developed for the San Francisco and Toronto rapid transit systems. However, the vibration control measures developed for rail transit systems are not effective for freight trains. The heavy axle loads associated with freight rail are outside the range of applicable design parameters for vibration reduction on lighter rail transit systems. Consequently the discussion in this section pertains to rail transit systems, not freight railroads. Any plan to relocate existing railroad tracks closer to vibration-sensitive sites in order to accommodate a new rail transit line in the right-of-way must be carefully considered since the increased vibration impact from freight trains will have to be borne by the community.

Although the focus is on rail systems in this section, there are very infrequent problems caused by buses and in these instances, the solution is rather straightforward. When buses do cause annoying ground-borne vibration, it is usually clear that the source of the problem is roadway roughness or unevenness caused by bumps, pot holes, expansion joints, or driveway transitions. Smoothing the roadway surface will usually solve the problem. In cases where a rubber-tired system runs inside a building, such as an airport people mover, vibration control may involve additional measures besides ensuring a smooth guideway. Loading and unloading of guideway support beams may generate dynamic forces that transmit into the building structure. Special guideway support systems may be required, similar to the discussion below regarding floating slabs.

The importance of adequate wheel and rail maintenance in controlling levels of ground-borne vibration cannot be overemphasized. Problems with rough wheels or rails can increase vibration levels by as much as 20 dB in extreme cases, negating the effects of even the most effective vibration control measures. It is rare that practical vibration control measures will provide more than 15 to 20 dB attenuation. When there are ground-borne vibration problems with existing transit equipment, the best vibration control measure often is to implement new or improved maintenance procedures. Grinding rough or corrugated rail and wheel truing to eliminate wheel flats and restore the wheel contour may provide more vibration reduction than would be obtainable from completely replacing the existing track system with floating slabs.

Given that the track and vehicles are in good condition, the options for further reductions in the vibration levels fit into one of seven categories: (1) maintenance procedures, (2) location and design of special trackwork, (3) vehicle modifications, (4) changes in the track support system, (5) building modifications, (6) adjustments to the vibration transmission path, and (7) operational changes.

Vibration reduction measures incur additional costs to a system. Some of the same treatments for noise mitigation can be considered for vibration mitigation. Costs for noise control measures are documented in a report from the Transit Cooperative Research Program (TCRP).⁽⁸⁾ Where applicable to vibration reduction, costs for noise abatement methods from that report are given in the following discussion.

- **Maintenance:** As discussed above, effective maintenance programs are essential for controlling ground-borne vibration. When the wheel and rail surfaces are allowed to degrade the vibration levels can increase by as much as 20 dB compared to a new or well-maintained system. Some maintenance procedures that are particularly effective at avoiding increases in ground-borne vibration are:
 - Rail grinding on a regular basis. Rail grinding is particularly important for rail that develops corrugations. The TCRP report notes that periodic rail grinding actually results in a net savings per year on wheel and rail wear. Most transit systems contract out rail grinding, although some of the larger systems make the investment of approximately \$1 million for the equipment and do their own grinding. Contractors typically charge a fixed amount per day for the equipment on site, plus an amount per pass-mile (one pass of the grinding machine for one mile). Typical fixed amounts would be \$15,000 per day and \$1000 per pass-mile.

- Wheel truing to re-contour the wheel, provide a smooth running surface, and remove wheel flats. The most dramatic vibration reduction results from removing wheel flats. However, significant improvements also can be observed simply from smoothing the running surface. A wheel truing machine costs approximately \$1 million. The TCRP report figures a system with 700 vehicles would incur a yearly cost of \$300,000 to \$400,000 for a wheel truing program.
 - Implement vehicle reconditioning programs, particularly when components such as suspension system, brakes, wheels, and slip-slide detectors will be involved. A slip-slide control system costs approximately \$5,000 to \$10,000 per vehicle, with a maintenance cost of \$200 per year.
 - Install wheel-flat detector systems to identify vehicles which are most in need of wheel truing. These systems are becoming more common on railroads and intercity passenger systems, but are relatively rare on transit systems. Therefore the costs are yet to be determined.
- **Planning and Design of Special Trackwork:** A large percentage of vibration impact from a new transit facility is often caused by wheel impacts at the special trackwork for turnouts and crossovers. When feasible, the most effective vibration control measure is to relocate the special trackwork to a less vibration-sensitive area. Sometimes this requires adjusting the location by several hundred feet and will not have a significant adverse impact on the operation plan for the system. Careful review of crossover and turnout locations during the preliminary engineering stage is an important step to minimizing potential for vibration impact. Another approach is to use special devices at turnouts and crossovers, special "frogs," that incorporate mechanisms to close the gaps between running rails. Frogs with spring-loaded mechanisms and frogs with movable points can significantly reduce vibration levels near crossovers. According to the TCRP report, a spring frog costs about \$12,000, twice the cost of a standard frog. A movable point frog involves elaborate signal and control circuitry resulting in higher costs, approximately \$200,000.
- **Vehicle Specifications:** The ideal rail vehicle, with respect to minimizing ground-borne vibration, should have a low unsprung weight, a soft primary suspension, a minimum of metal-to-metal contact between moving parts of the truck, and smooth wheels that are perfectly round. A limit for the vertical resonance frequency of the primary suspension should be included in the specifications for any new vehicle. A vertical resonance frequency of 12 Hz or less is sufficient to control the levels of ground-borne vibration. Some have recommended that transit vehicle specifications require that the vertical resonance frequency be less than 8 Hz.
- **Special Track Support Systems:** When the vibration assessment indicates that vibration levels will be excessive, it is usually the track support system that is changed to reduce the vibration levels. Floating slabs, resiliently supported ties, high-resilience fasteners, and ballast mats have all been used in subways to reduce the levels of ground-borne vibration. To be effective, all of these measures must be optimized for the frequency spectrum of the vibration. Most of these relatively standard

procedures have been successfully used on several subway projects. Applications on at-grade and elevated track are less common. This is because vibration problems are less common for at-grade and elevated track; cost of the vibration control measures is a higher percentage of the construction costs of at-grade and elevated track; and exposure to the elements can require significant design modifications.

Each of the major vibration control measures for track support is discussed below. Costs for these treatments are not covered by the TCRP report, but are given as estimates based on transit agency experience.

- Resilient Fasteners: Resilient fasteners are used to fasten the rail to concrete track slabs. Standard resilient fasteners are very stiff in the vertical direction, usually in the range of 200,000 lb/in., although they do provide vibration reduction compared to some of the rigid fastening systems used on older systems (e.g., wood half-ties embedded in concrete). Special fasteners with vertical stiffness in the range of 30,000 lb/in. will reduce vibration by as much as 5 to 10 dB at frequencies above 30 to 40 Hz. Premium fasteners cost approximately \$300 per track-foot, about 6 times the cost of standard fasteners.
- Ballast Mats: A ballast mat consists of a rubber or other type of elastomer pad that is placed under the ballast. The mat generally must be placed on a concrete pad to be effective. They will not be as effective if placed directly on the soil or the sub-ballast. Consequently, most ballast mat applications are in subway or elevated structures. Ballast mats can provide 10 to 15 dB attenuation at frequencies above 25 to 30 Hz. Ballast mats are often a good retrofit measure for existing tie-and-ballast track where there are vibration problems. Installed ballast mats cost approximately \$180 per track-foot.
- Resiliently Supported Ties: The resiliently supported tie system consists of concrete ties supported by rubber pads. The rails are fastened directly to the concrete ties using standard rail clips. Existing measurement data indicate that resiliently supported ties may be very effective in reducing low-frequency vibration in the 15 to 40 Hz range. This makes them particularly appropriate for transit systems with vibration problems in the 20 to 30 Hz range. A resiliently supported tie system costs approximately \$400 per track-foot. Although most commonly used in slab track or subway tunnel applications, another version of a resiliently supported tie system involves attaching thick rubber pads directly to the underside of ties in ballast. This treatment costs approximately the same as a ballast mat, or \$180 per track foot.
- Floating Slabs: Floating slabs can be very effective at controlling ground-borne vibration and noise. They basically consist of a concrete slab supported on resilient elements, usually rubber or a similar elastomer. A variant that was first used in Toronto and is generally referred to as the double tie system, consists of 5-foot-long slabs with 4 or more rubber pads under each slab. Floating slabs are effective at frequencies greater than their single-degree-of-freedom vertical resonance frequency. The floating slabs used in

Washington DC, Atlanta, and Boston were all designed to have a vertical resonance in the 14 to 17 Hz range. A special floating slab in San Francisco's BART system uses a very heavy design with a resonance frequency in the 5 to 10 Hz frequency range. The primary disadvantage of floating slabs is that they tend to be the most expensive of the vibration control treatments. A typical double-tie floating slab system costs approximately \$600 per track foot.

- o **Other Marginal Treatments:** Changing any feature of the track support system can change the levels of ground-borne vibration. Approaches such as using heavier rail, thicker ballast, or heavier ties can be expected to reduce the vibration levels. There also is some indication that vibration levels are lower with wood ties compared to concrete ties. However, there is little confirmation that any of these approaches will make a significant change in the vibration levels. This is unfortunate since modifications to the ballast, rails, or ties are virtually the only options for normal at-grade, tie-and-ballast track without resorting to a different type of track support system or widening the right-of-way to provide a buffer zone.
- **Building Modifications:** In some circumstances, it is practical to modify the impacted building to reduce the vibration levels. Vibration isolation of buildings basically consists of supporting the building foundation on elastomer pads similar to bridge bearing pads. Vibration isolation of buildings is seldom an option for existing buildings; normal applications are possible only for new construction. This approach is particularly important for shared-use facilities such as office space above a transit station or terminal. When vibration-sensitive equipment such as electron microscopes will be affected by transit vibration, specific modifications to the building structure may be the most cost-effective method of controlling the impact. For example, the floor upon which the vibration-sensitive equipment is located could be stiffened and isolated from the remainder of the building to reduce the vibration. Alternatively, the equipment could be isolated from the building at far less cost.
- **Trenches:** Use of trenches to control ground-borne vibration is analogous to controlling airborne noise with sound barriers. Although this approach has not received much attention in the U.S., there are cases where a trench can be a practical method for controlling transit vibration from at-grade track. A rule-of-thumb given by Richert and Hall⁽⁹⁾ is that if the trench is located close to the source, the trench bottom must be at least 0.6 times the Rayleigh wavelength below the vibration source. For most soils, Rayleigh waves travel at around 600 ft/sec which means that the wavelength at 30 Hz is 20 ft. This means that the trench must be approximately 15 ft deep to be effective at 30 Hz.

A trench can be effective as a vibration barrier if it is either open or solid. The Toronto Transit Commission tested a trench filled with styrofoam to keep it open and reported successful performance over a period of at least one year. Solid barriers can be constructed with sheet piling or concrete poured into a trench.

- **Operational Changes:** The most obvious operational change is to reduce the vehicle speed. Reducing the train speed by a factor of two will reduce vibration levels approximately 6 dB. Other operational changes that can be effective in special cases are:
 - Use the equipment that generates the lowest vibration levels during the nighttime hours when people are most sensitive to vibration and noise.
 - Adjust nighttime schedules to minimize movements in the most sensitive hours.

While there are tangible benefits from speed reductions and limits on operations during the most sensitive time periods, these types of measures are usually not practical from the standpoint of service requirements. Furthermore, vibration reduction achieved through operating restrictions requires continuous monitoring and will be negated if vehicle operators do not adhere to established policies. As with the options for noise control, FTA does not recommend limits on operations as a way to reduce vibration impacts.

- **Buffer Zones:** Expanding the rail right-of-way sometimes will be the most economical method of reducing the vibration impact. A similar approach is to negotiate a vibration easement from the affected property owners, for example, a row of single-family homes adjacent to a proposed commuter rail line. However, there may be legal limitations on the ability of funding agencies to acquire land strictly for the purpose of mitigating vibration (or noise) impact.

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12. NOISE AND VIBRATION DURING CONSTRUCTION

Construction often generates community noise/vibration complaints, even when it takes place over a limited time frame. In recent years, public concerns about construction noise and vibration have increased significantly, due partly to lengthy periods of heavy construction on some “mega-projects” and also to the increasing prevalence of nighttime construction that is undertaken to avoid disrupting workday road and rail traffic. Noise and vibration complaints typically arise from interference with people’s activities, especially when the adjacent community has no clear understanding of the extent or duration of the construction. Misunderstandings can arise when the contractor is considered to be insensitive by the community, even though the contractor believes the work is being performed in compliance with local ordinances. This situation underscores the need for early identification and assessment of potential problem areas.

An assessment of noise and vibration impact during construction can be made by following procedures outlined in this chapter. The type of assessment – qualitative or quantitative – and the level of analysis will be determined based on the scale of the project and surrounding land use. In cases where a full quantitative assessment is not warranted, a qualitative assessment of the construction noise and vibration environment can lead to greater understanding and tolerance in the community. For major projects with extended periods of construction at specific locations, a quantitative assessment can aid contractors in making bids by allowing changes in construction approach and including mitigation costs before the construction plans are finalized.

12.1 CONSTRUCTION NOISE ASSESSMENT

Noise impacts from construction may vary greatly depending on the duration and complexity of the project. The level of detail of a construction noise assessment depends on the scale and the type of project and the stage of environmental review. Many small projects need no construction noise assessment at all.

Examples include installation of safety features like grade-crossing signals, track improvements within the right-of-way, and erecting small buildings and facilities which are similar in scale to the surrounding development. For projects like these, it would suffice to describe the length of time of construction, the loudest equipment to be used, expected truck access routes, and avoidance of nighttime activity.

Other projects involving a limited period of construction time – less than a month in a noise-sensitive area – may warrant a qualitative treatment because of nearby noise-sensitive land uses. In these cases, the assessment may simply be a qualitative description of the equipment to be used, the duration of construction, and any mitigation requirements placed on particularly noisy operations. Where the length of construction in noise-sensitive areas is expected to last for more than several months or particularly noisy equipment will be involved, then construction noise impacts may be determined in considerable detail. In any case, a likely scenario of the planned construction methods should be described in the environmental document. At this early stage it may be possible to describe certain basic measures that would be taken to reduce the potential impact, for example, prohibiting the noisiest construction activities during nighttime. However, it may be prudent to defer final decisions on noise control measures until the project and construction plans are defined in greater detail during final design.

Qualitative Assessments. In cases where a qualitative construction noise assessment is appropriate, the following descriptions would be included:

- Duration of construction (overall and at specific locations)
- Equipment expected to be used, e.g., noisiest operations
- Schedule with limits on times of operation, e.g., daytime use only
- Monitoring of noise
- Forum for communicating with the public
- Commitments to limit noise levels to certain levels, including any local ordinances that apply
- Consideration of application of noise control treatments used successfully in other projects

Community relations will be important in these cases; early information disseminated to the public about the kinds of equipment, expected noise levels and durations will help to forewarn potentially affected neighbors about the temporary inconvenience. In these cases, a general description of the variation of noise levels during a typical construction day may be helpful. The criteria in Section 12.1.3 are not applied to qualitative assessments.

Quantitative Assessments. Factors that influence the decision to perform a quantitative construction noise assessment include the following:

- Scale of the project
- Proximity of noise-sensitive land uses to the construction zones

- Number of noise-sensitive receptors in the project area
- Duration of construction activities near noise-sensitive receptors
- Schedule (the construction days, hours and time periods)
- Method (e.g., cut-and-cover vs. bored tunneling)
- Concern about construction noise expressed in comments by the general public (scoping, public meetings)

A quantitative construction noise assessment requires information about source levels, operations, proximity of noise sensitive locations, and criteria against which the levels will be compared. These elements of assessment are described in the following sections.

12.1.1 Quantitative Noise Assessment Methods

A quantitative construction noise assessment is performed by comparing the predicted noise levels with impact criteria appropriate for the construction stage. The approach requires an appropriate descriptor, a standardized prediction method and a set of recognized criteria for assessing the impact.

The *descriptor* used for construction noise is the L_{eq} . This unit is appropriate for the following reasons:

- It can be used to describe the noise level from operation of each piece of equipment separately and is easy to combine to represent the noise level from all equipment operating during a given period.
- It can be used to describe the noise level during an entire phase.
- It can be used to describe the average noise over all phases of the construction.

The recommended *method* for predicting construction noise impact for major transit projects requires:

- An emission model to determine the noise generated by the equipment at a reference distance.
- A propagation model that shows how the noise level will vary with distance.
- A way of summing the noise of each piece of equipment at locations of noise sensitivity.

The first two components of the method are related by the following equation:

$$L_{eq}(equip) = E.L. + 10 \log(U.F.) - 20 \log(D/50) - 10G \log(D/50)$$

where: $L_{eq}(equip)$ is the L_{eq} at a receiver resulting from the operation of a single piece of equipment over a specified time period

$E.L.$ is the noise emission level of the particular piece of equipment at the reference distance of 50 feet, taken from Table 12-1

G is a constant that accounts for topography and ground effects, taken from Figure 6-5 (Chapter 6)

D is the distance from the receiver to the piece of equipment, and

$U.F.$ is a usage factor that accounts for the fraction of time that the equipment is in use over the specified time period.

The combination of noise from several pieces of equipment operating during the same time period is obtained from decibel addition of the L_{eq} of each single piece of equipment found from the above equation.

General Assessment

The approach can be as detailed as necessary to characterize the construction noise by specifying the various quantities in the equation. For projects in an early assessment stage when the equipment roster and schedule are undefined, only a rough estimate of construction noise levels is practical.

The following assumptions are adequate for a general assessment of each phase of construction:

- Full power operation for a time period of one hour is assumed because most construction equipment operates continuously for periods of one hour or more at some point in the construction period. Therefore, $U.F. = 1$, and $10 \log(U.F.) = 0$.
- Free-field conditions are assumed and ground effects are ignored. Consequently, $G = 0$.
- Emission level at 50 feet, E.L., is taken from Table 12-1.
- All pieces of equipment are assumed to operate at the center of the project, or centerline, in the case of a guideway or highway construction project.
- The predictions include only the two noisiest pieces of equipment expected to be used in each construction phase.

Detailed Assessment

A more detailed approach can be used if warranted, such as when a large number of noise-sensitive sites are adjacent to a construction project or where contractors are faced with stringent local ordinances or heightened public concerns expressed in early outreach efforts. Additional details include:

- Duration. Long-term construction project noise impact is based on a 30-day average L_{dn} , the times of day of construction activity (nighttime noise is penalized by 10 dB in residential areas), and the percentage of time the equipment is to be used during a period of time which will affect $U.F.$ For example, an 8-hour L_{eq} is determined by making $U.F.$ the percentage of time each individual piece of equipment operates under full power in that period. Similarly, the 30-day average L_{dn} is determined

from the U.F. expressed by the percentage of time the equipment is used during the daytime hours (7 a.m. to 10 p.m.) and nighttime (10 p.m. to 7 a.m.), separately over a 30-day period. However, to account for increased sensitivity to nighttime noise, the nighttime percentage is multiplied by 10 before performing the computation.

- Site Characteristics. Taking into account the site topography, natural and man-made barriers and ground effects will involve the factor G. Use Figure 6-5 (Chapter 6) to calculate G.
- Noise Sources. Measuring or certifying the emission level of each piece of equipment will refine E.L.
- Site Layout. Determining the location of each piece of equipment while it is working will specify the distance factor D more accurately.
- Combined Sources. Including all pieces of equipment in the computation of the 8-hour L_{eq} and the 30-day average L_{dn} will determine the total noise levels using Table 6-11 (Chapter 6).

12.1.2 Noise from Typical Construction Equipment and Operations

The noise levels generated by construction equipment will vary greatly depending on factors such as the type of equipment, the specific model, the operation being performed, and the condition of the equipment. The equivalent sound level (L_{eq}) of the construction activity also depends on the fraction of time that the equipment is operated over the time period of construction. The dominant source of noise from most construction equipment is the engine, usually a diesel, often without sufficient muffling. In a few cases, such as impact pile-driving or pavement-breaking, noise generated by the process dominates.

For considerations of noise assessment, construction equipment can be considered to operate in two modes, stationary and mobile. Stationary equipment operates in one location for one or more days at a time, with either a fixed power operation (pumps, generators, compressors) or a variable noise operation (pile drivers, pavement breakers). Mobile equipment moves around the construction site with power applied in cyclic fashion (bulldozers, loaders), or to and from the site (trucks). The movement around the site is handled in the construction noise prediction procedure discussed earlier in this chapter. Variation in power imposes additional complexity in characterizing the noise source level from a piece of equipment. This is handled by describing the noise at a reference distance from the equipment operating at full power and adjusting it based on the duty cycle of the activity to determine the L_{eq} of the operation. Standardized procedures for measuring the exterior noise levels for the certification of mobile and stationary construction equipment have been developed by the Society of Automotive Engineers.^(1,2) Typical noise levels from representative pieces of equipment are listed in Table 12-1. These source levels can be used in FHWA's Windows-based screening tool, "Roadway Construction Noise Model" (RCNM), for the prediction of construction noise.⁽³⁾

Construction activities are characterized by variations in the power expended by equipment, with resulting variation in noise levels with time. Variation in the power is expressed in terms of the

previously mentioned "usage factor" of the equipment, which is the percentage of time during the workday that the equipment is operating at full power. Time-varying noise levels are converted to a single number (L_{eq}) for each piece of equipment during the operation. Besides having daily variations in activities, major construction projects are accomplished in several different phases. Each phase has a specific equipment mix depending on the work to be accomplished during that phase.

As a result of the equipment mix, each phase has its own noise characteristics; some have higher continuous noise levels than others, some have high impact noise levels. The purpose of the quantitative assessment is to determine not only the levels, but also the duration of the noise. The L_{eq} of each phase is determined by combining the L_{eq} contributions from each piece of equipment used in that phase. The impact and the consequent noise mitigation approaches depend on the criteria to be used in assessing impact, as discussed in the next section.

Table 12-1. Construction Equipment Noise Emission Levels	
Equipment	Typical Noise Level (dBA) 50 ft from Source
Air Compressor	81
Backhoe	80
Ballast Equalizer	82
Ballast Tamper	83
Compactor	82
Concrete Mixer	85
Concrete Pump	82
Concrete Vibrator	76
Crane, Derrick	88
Crane, Mobile	83
Dozer	85
Generator	81
Grader	85
Impact Wrench	85
Jack Hammer	88
Loader	85
Paver	89
Pile-driver (Impact)	101
Pile-driver (Sonic)	96
Pneumatic Tool	85
Pump	76
Rail Saw	90
Rock Drill	98
Roller	74

Table 12-1. Construction Equipment Noise Emission Levels (continued)	
Equipment	Typical Noise Level (dBA) 50 ft from Source
Saw	76
Scarifier	83
Scraper	89
Shovel	82
Spike Driver	77
Tie Cutter	84
Tie Handler	80
Tie Inserter	85
Truck	88
<i>Table based on an EPA Report,⁽⁴⁾ measured data from railroad construction equipment taken during the Northeast Corridor Improvement Project, and other measured data.</i>	

12.1.3 Construction Noise Criteria

No standardized *criteria* have been developed for assessing construction noise impact. Consequently, criteria must be developed on a project-specific basis unless local ordinances can be found to apply. Generally, local noise ordinances are not very useful in evaluating construction noise. They usually relate to nuisance and hours of allowed activity and sometimes specify limits in terms of maximum levels, but are generally not practical for assessing the impact of a construction project. Project construction noise criteria should take into account the existing noise environment, the absolute noise levels during construction activities, the duration of the construction, and the adjacent land use. While it is not the purpose of this manual to specify standardized criteria for construction noise impact, the following guidelines can be considered reasonable criteria for assessment. If these criteria are exceeded, there may be adverse community reaction.

General Assessment

Estimate the combined noise level in one hour from the two noisiest pieces of equipment, assuming they both operate at the same time. Then identify locations where the level exceeds the following:

<u>Land Use</u>	<u>One-hour L_{eq} (dBA)</u>	
	<u>Day</u>	<u>Night</u>
Residential	90	80
Commercial	100	100
Industrial	100	100

Detailed Assessment

Where a more refined analysis is needed, predict the noise level in terms of 8-hour L_{eq} and 30-day averaged L_{dn} and compare to criteria in the following table:

<u>Land Use</u>	<u>8-hour L_{eq} (dBA)</u>		<u>L_{dn} (dBA)</u>
	<u>Day</u>	<u>Night</u>	<u>30-day Average</u>
Residential	80	70	75 ^(a)
Commercial	85	85	80 ^(b)
Industrial	90	90	85 ^(b)

^(a) In urban areas with very high ambient noise levels ($L_{dn} > 65$ dB), L_{dn} from construction operations should not exceed existing ambient + 10 dB.

^(b) Twenty-four-hour L_{eq} , not L_{dn} .

12.1.4 Mitigation of Construction Noise

After using the above approaches to locate potential impacts from construction noise, the next step is to identify appropriate control measures. Three categories of noise control approaches, with examples, are given below:

1. *Design considerations and project layout:*

- Construct noise barriers, such as temporary walls or piles of excavated material, between noisy activities and noise-sensitive receivers.
- Re-route truck traffic away from residential streets, if possible. Select streets with fewest homes if no alternatives are available.
- Site equipment on the construction lot as far away from noise-sensitive sites as possible.
- Construct walled enclosures around especially noisy activities or clusters of noisy equipment. For example, shields can be used around pavement breakers and loaded vinyl curtains can be draped under elevated structures.

2. *Sequence of operations:*

- Combine noisy operations to occur in the same time period. The total noise level produced will not be significantly greater than the level produced if the operations were performed separately.
- Avoid nighttime activities. Sensitivity to noise increases during the nighttime hours in residential neighborhoods.

3. *Alternative construction methods:*

- Avoid use of an impact pile driver where possible in noise-sensitive areas. Drilled piles or the use of a sonic or vibratory pile driver are quieter alternatives where the geological conditions permit their use.
- Use specially-quieted equipment, such as quieted and enclosed air compressors and properly-working mufflers on all engines.
- Select quieter demolition methods, where possible. For example, sawing bridge decks into sections that can be loaded onto trucks results in lower cumulative noise levels than impact demolition by pavement breakers.

If possible, the environmental impact assessment should include descriptions of how each impacted location will be treated with one or more mitigation measures. However, with a large, complex project, the information available during the preliminary engineering phase may not allow final decisions to be made on all specific mitigation measures. In such cases, it is appropriate to describe and commit to a mitigation plan that will be developed during final design. The objective of the plan should be to minimize construction noise using all reasonable (i.e., cost vs. benefit) and feasible (i.e., physically achievable) means available. Components of the plan may include some or all of the following provisions which would be specified in construction contracts:

- *Equipment noise emission limits.* These are absolute noise limits applied to generic classes of equipment at a reference distance (typically 50 feet). The limits should be set no higher than what is reasonably achievable for well-maintained equipment with effective mufflers. Lower limits that require source noise control may be appropriate for certain equipment when needed to minimize community noise impact, if reasonable and feasible. Provisions could also be included to require equipment noise certification testing prior to use on site.
- *Lot-line construction noise limits.* These are noise limits that apply at the lot line of specific noise-sensitive properties. The limits are typically specified in terms of both noise exposure (usually L_{eq} over a 20-30 minute period) and maximum noise level. They should be based on local noise ordinances, if applicable, as well as pre-construction baseline noise levels; limits that are 3-5 decibels above the baseline are often used.
- *Operational and/or equipment restrictions.* It may be necessary to prohibit or restrict certain construction equipment and activities near residential areas during nighttime hours. This is particularly true for activities that generate tonal, impulsive or repetitive sounds, such as back-up alarms, hoe ram demolition and pile-driving.
- *Noise abatement requirements.* In some cases specifications may be provided for particular noise control treatments, based on the results of the design analysis and/or prior commitments made to the public by civic authorities. An example would be the requirement for a temporary noise barrier to shield a particular community area from noisy construction activities.

- *Noise monitoring plan requirements.* Plans can be developed for pre-project noise monitoring to establish baseline noise levels at sensitive locations, as well as for periodic equipment and lot-line noise monitoring during the construction period. The plan should outline the measurement and reporting methods that will be used to demonstrate compliance with the project noise limits.
- *Noise control plan requirements.* For major construction projects, specifications have required the preparation and submission of noise control plans on a periodic basis (e.g., every six months). These plans should predict the construction noise at noise-sensitive receptor locations based on the proposed construction equipment and methods. If the analysis predicts that the specified noise limits will be exceeded, the plan should specify the mitigation measures that will be applied and should demonstrate the expected noise reductions these measures will achieve. The objective of this proactive approach is to minimize the likelihood of community noise complaints by ensuring that any necessary mitigation measures are included in the construction plans.
- *Compliance enforcement program.* If construction noise is a significant issue in the community, it is important that a program be put in place to monitor contractor compliance with the noise control specifications and mitigation plan. It is best that this function be performed by a construction management team on behalf of the public agency.
- *Public information and complaint response procedures.* To maintain positive community relations, the public should be kept informed about the construction plans and efforts to minimize noise, and procedures should be established for prompt response and corrective action with regard to noise complaints during construction.

Most of these provisions are appropriate for very large projects where construction activity will continue for many months, if not years. References 4 and 5 contain details on dealing with construction noise on major transportation projects.^(5,6)

12.2 CONSTRUCTION VIBRATION ASSESSMENT

Construction activity can result in varying degrees of ground vibration, depending on the equipment and methods employed. Operation of construction equipment causes ground vibrations that spread through the ground and diminish in strength with distance. Buildings founded on the soil in the vicinity of the construction site respond to these vibrations, with varying results ranging from no perceptible effects at the lowest levels, low rumbling sounds and perceptible vibrations at moderate levels, and slight damage at the highest levels. As expressed previously in this chapter with respect to construction noise, the type of assessment – qualitative or quantitative – and the level of construction vibration analysis will be determined by factors related to the scale of the project and the sensitivity of the surrounding land use. A quantitative analysis should be conducted in cases where construction vibration may result in prolonged annoyance or building damage.

Ground vibrations from construction activities do not often reach the levels that can damage structures, but they can achieve the audible and feelable ranges in buildings very close to the site. A possible

exception is the case of fragile buildings, many of them old, where special care must be taken to avoid damage. The construction vibration criteria include special consideration for such buildings. The construction activities that typically generate the most severe vibrations are blasting and impact pile-driving.

In cases where prolonged annoyance or damage from construction vibrations are not expected, a qualitative assessment is appropriate. Such an assessment should include a description of the duration and the type of equipment to be used during the construction, with an explanation of how the ground-borne vibration will be maintained at an acceptable level. For example, if the equipment is of the type that generates little or no ground vibration – air compressors, light trucks, hydraulic loaders, etc. – a simple explanation is sufficient and no quantitative analysis is necessary.

12.2.1 Quantitative Construction Vibration Assessment Methods

Construction vibration should be assessed quantitatively in cases where there is significant potential for impact from construction activities. Such activities include blasting, pile-driving, vibratory compaction, demolition, and drilling or excavation in close proximity to sensitive structures. The recommended procedure for estimating vibration impact from construction activities is as follows:

Damage Assessment

- Select the equipment and associated vibration source levels at a reference distance of 25 feet from Table 12-2.
- Make the propagation adjustment according to the following formula (this formula is based on point sources with normal propagation conditions):

$$PPV_{equip} = PPV_{ref} \times (25/D)^{1.5}$$

where: PPV (equip) is the peak particle velocity in in/sec of the equipment adjusted for distance

PPV (ref) is the reference vibration level in in/sec at 25 feet from Table 12-2

D is the distance from the equipment to the receiver.

- Apply the vibration damage criteria from Table 12-3.

Annoyance Assessment

- If desired for consideration of annoyance or interference with vibration-sensitive activities, estimate the vibration level L_v at any distance D from the following equation and apply the vibration impact criteria for General Assessment in Chapter 8 for vibration-sensitive sites:

$$L_v(D) = L_v(25 \text{ ft}) - 30 \log(D/25)$$

12.2.2 Vibration Source Levels from Construction Equipment

Ground-borne vibration related to human annoyance is generally related to root mean square (rms) velocity levels expressed in VdB. However, a major concern with regard to construction vibration is building damage. Consequently, construction vibration is generally assessed in terms of peak particle velocity (PPV), as defined in Chapter 7.1.2. The relationship of PPV to rms velocity is expressed in terms of the “crest factor,” defined as the ratio of the PPV amplitude to the rms amplitude. Peak particle velocity is typically a factor of 1.7 to 6 times greater than rms vibration velocity.

Various types of construction equipment have been measured under a wide variety of construction activities with an average of source levels reported in terms of velocity as shown in Table 12-2. In this table, a crest factor of 4 (representing a PPV-rms difference of 12 VdB) has been used to calculate the approximate rms vibration velocity levels from the PPV values. Although the table gives one level for each piece of equipment, it should be noted that there is a considerable variation in reported ground vibration levels from construction activities. The data provide a reasonable estimate for a wide range of soil conditions.

Table 12-2. Vibration Source Levels for Construction Equipment (From measured data.^(7,8,9,10))			
Equipment		PPV at 25 ft (in/sec)	Approximate L_v[†] at 25 ft
Pile Driver (impact)	upper range	1.518	112
	typical	0.644	104
Pile Driver (sonic)	upper range	0.734	105
	typical	0.170	93
Clam shovel drop (slurry wall)		0.202	94
Hydromill (slurry wall)	in soil	0.008	66
	in rock	0.017	75
Vibratory Roller		0.210	94
Hoe Ram		0.089	87
Large bulldozer		0.089	87
Caisson drilling		0.089	87
Loaded trucks		0.076	86
Jackhammer		0.035	79
Small bulldozer		0.003	58
† RMS velocity in decibels (VdB) re 1 micro-inch/second			

12.2.2 Construction Vibration Criteria

For evaluating potential annoyance or interference with vibration-sensitive activities due to construction vibration, the criteria for General Assessment in Chapter 8 can be applied. In most cases, however, the primary concern regarding construction vibration relates to potential damage effects. Guideline vibration damage criteria are given in Table 12-3 for various structural categories.⁽¹⁰⁾ In this table, a crest factor of 4 (representing a PPV-rms difference of 12 VdB) has been used to calculate the approximate rms vibration velocity limits from the PPV limits. These limits should be viewed as criteria that should be used during the environmental impact assessment phase to identify problem locations that must be addressed during final design.

Table 12-3. Construction Vibration Damage Criteria ⁽¹¹⁾		
Building Category	PPV (in/sec)	Approximate L_v [†]
I. Reinforced-concrete, steel or timber (no plaster)	0.5	102
II. Engineered concrete and masonry (no plaster)	0.3	98
III. Non-engineered timber and masonry buildings	0.2	94
IV. Buildings extremely susceptible to vibration damage	0.12	90
[†] RMS velocity in decibels (VdB) re 1 micro-inch/second		

12.2.3 Construction Vibration Mitigation

After using the above methods to locate potential human impacts or building damage from construction vibrations, the next step is to identify control measures. Similar to the approach for construction noise, mitigation of construction vibration requires consideration of equipment location and processes, as follows:

1. *Design considerations and project layout:*
 - Route heavily-loaded trucks away from residential streets, if possible. Select streets with fewest homes if no alternatives are available.
 - Operate earth-moving equipment on the construction lot as far away from vibration-sensitive sites as possible.
2. *Sequence of operations:*
 - Phase demolition, earth-moving and ground-impacting operations so as not to occur in the same time period. Unlike noise, the total vibration level produced could be significantly less when each vibration source operates separately.

- Avoid nighttime activities. People are more aware of vibration in their homes during the nighttime hours.
3. *Alternative construction methods:*
- Avoid impact pile-driving where possible in vibration-sensitive areas. Drilled piles or the use of a sonic or vibratory pile driver causes lower vibration levels where the geological conditions permit their use (however, see cautionary note below).
 - Select demolition methods not involving impact, where possible. For example, sawing bridge decks into sections that can be loaded onto trucks results in lower vibration levels than impact demolition by pavement breakers, and milling generates lower vibration levels than excavation using clam shell or chisel drops.
 - Avoid vibratory rollers and packers near sensitive areas.

Pile-driving is one of the greatest sources of vibration associated with equipment used during construction of a project. The source levels in Table 12-2 indicate that sonic pile drivers may provide substantial reduction of vibration levels. However, there are some additional vibration effects of sonic pile drivers that may limit their use in sensitive locations. A sonic pile driver operates by continuously shaking the pile at a fixed frequency, literally vibrating it into the ground. Vibratory pile drivers operate on the same principle, but at a different frequency. However, continuous operation at a fixed frequency may be more noticeable to nearby residents, even at lower vibration levels. Furthermore, the steady-state excitation of the ground may induce a growth in the resonant response of building components. Resonant response may be unacceptable in cases of fragile buildings or vibration-sensitive manufacturing processes. Impact pile drivers, on the other hand, produce a high vibration level for a short time (0.2 seconds) with sufficient time between impacts to allow any resonant response to decay.

As with construction noise, in many cases the information available during the preliminary engineering phase will not be sufficient to define specific construction vibration mitigation measures. In such cases, it is appropriate to describe and commit to a mitigation plan that will be developed and implemented during the final design and construction phases of the project. The objective of the plan should be to minimize construction vibration damage using all reasonable and feasible means available. The plan should provide a procedure for establishing threshold and limiting vibration values for potentially affected structures based on an assessment of each structure's ability to withstand the loads and displacements due to construction vibrations. The plan should also include the development of a vibration monitoring plan during final design and the implementation of a compliance monitoring program during construction.

REFERENCES

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5. E. Thalheimer, "Construction noise control program and mitigation strategy at the Central Artery/Tunnel Project," Noise Control Eng. J. 48(5), September – October 2000, pp. 157 – 165.
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9. J.F. Wiss, "Damage Effects of Pile Driving Vibrations," Highway Research Record, No. 155, Highway Research Board, 1967.
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13. DOCUMENTATION OF NOISE AND VIBRATION ASSESSMENT

To be effective, the noise and vibration analysis must be presented to the public in a clear, yet comprehensive manner. The mass of technical data and information necessary to withstand scrutiny in the environmental review process must be documented in a way that remains intelligible to the public. Justification for all assumptions used in the analysis, such as selection of representative measurement sites and all baseline conditions, must be presented for review. For large-scale projects, the environmental document contains a condensation of essential information in order to maintain a reasonable size. For these projects, separate technical reports are usually prepared as supplements to the environmental impact statement (EIS) or environmental assessment (EA). For smaller projects, or ones with minimal noise or vibration impact, all the technical information may be presented in the environmental document itself. This chapter gives guidance on how the necessary noise and vibration information should be included in the project's environmental documentation.

13.1 THE TECHNICAL REPORT ON NOISE AND VIBRATION

A separate technical report is often prepared as a supplement to the environmental document (EIS or EA). A technical report is appropriate in cases when the wealth of data can not all be placed in the environmental document. The details of the analysis are important for establishing the basis for the assessment. Consequently, all the details in the technical report should be contained in a well-organized format for easy access to the information. While the technical report is not intended to be a primer on the subject, the technical data and descriptions should be presented in a manner that can be understood by the general public. All the necessary background information should be present in the technical report, including tables, maps, charts, drawings and references that may be too detailed for the environmental document, but which are important in helping to draw conclusions about the project's noise and vibration impacts and mitigation options.

13.1.1 Organization of Technical Report

The technical report on noise/vibration should contain the following major subject headings, along with the key information content described below. If both noise and vibration have been analyzed, it is generally preferable to separate the noise and vibration sections; as shown in this guidance manual, the approaches to the two topics are quite different.

- **Overview:** This section contains a brief description of the project and an overview of the noise/vibration concerns. It sets forth the initial considerations in framing the scope of the study.
- **Inventory of Noise/Vibration-Sensitive Sites:** The approach for selecting noise- and vibration-sensitive sites should be described in sufficient detail to demonstrate completeness. Sites and site descriptions are to be included.
- **Measurements of Existing Noise/Vibration Conditions:** The basis for selecting measurement sites should be documented, along with tables of sites coordinated with maps showing locations of sites. If the measurement data are used to estimate existing conditions at other locations, the rationale and the method should be included. Measurement procedures should be fully described. Tables of measurement instruments should include manufacturer, type, serial number and date of most recent calibration by authorized testing laboratory. Measurement periods, including time of day and length of time at each site should be shown to demonstrate adequate representation of the ambient conditions. The measurement data should be presented in well organized form in tables and figures. A summary and interpretation of measured data should be included.
- **Special Measurements Related to the Project:** Some projects require specialized measurements at sensitive sites, such as outdoor-to-indoor noise level reduction of homes, or transmission of vibrations into concert halls and recording studios. Other projects may need special source-level characterization. Full description of the measurements and the results should be included.
- **Predictions of Noise/Vibration from the Project:** The prediction model used for estimating future project conditions should be fully described and referenced. Any changes or extensions to the models recommended in this manual should be fully described so that the validity of the adjustments can be confirmed. Specific data used as input to the models should be listed. Computed levels should be tabulated and illustrated by contours, cross-sections or shaded mapping. It is important to illustrate noise/vibration impacts with base maps at a scale with enough detail to provide location reference for the reader.
- **Noise/Vibration Criteria:** Impact criteria for the project should be fully described and referenced (refer to Chapters 3 and 8). In addition, any applicable local ordinances should be described. Tables specifying the criteria levels should also be included. If the project involves considerable construction, and a separate construction noise and vibration analysis will be included, then construction criteria should appear in a separate section with its own assessment.
- **Noise/Vibration Impact Assessment:** The impact assessment should be described according to the procedures outlined in this manual. A resulting impact inventory should be presented for each alternative mode or alignment in a format that allows ready comparison among alternatives. The

inventory should be tabulated according to the different types of land uses affected. The results of the assessment may be presented both before and after mitigation.

- **Noise/Vibration Mitigation:** The mitigation section of the technical report should begin with a summary of all treatments considered, even if some are not carried to final consideration. Final candidate mitigation treatments should be considered separately with description of the features of the treatment, costs, expected benefit in reducing impacts, locations where the benefit would be realized and discussion of practicality of implementing alternative treatments. With respect to noise impacts, enough information is to be included to allow the project sponsor and FTA to reach decisions on mitigation prior to issuance of the final environmental document.
- **Construction Noise/Vibration Impacts:** Criteria adopted for construction noise or vibration should be described, if appropriate. According to Chapter 12, these may be adopted on a project-specific basis. The method used for predicting construction noise or vibration should be described along with inputs to the models, such as equipment roster by construction phase, equipment source levels, assumed usage factors and other assumed site characteristics. The predicted levels should be shown for sensitive sites and short-term impacts should be identified. In cases where construction impacts appear to be problematic, feasible abatement methods should be discussed in enough detail such that construction contract documents could include mitigation measures.
- **References:** References should be provided for all criteria, approaches and data used in the analyses, including other reports related to the project which may be relied on for information, e.g., geotechnical reports.

13.2 THE ENVIRONMENTAL DOCUMENT

The environmental document typically includes noise and vibration information in three places: a section of the chapter on the affected environment (existing conditions) and two sections in the chapter on environmental consequences (the long-term impacts from operations and short-term impacts from construction activity). The noise and vibration information presented in the environmental document is a summary of the comprehensive information from the technical report with emphasis on presenting the salient points of the analysis in a format and style which affected property owners and other interested citizens can understand. Smaller projects may have all of the technical information contained within the environmental document, requiring special care in summarizing technical details to convey the information adequately.

The environmental document provides full disclosure of noise and vibration impacts, including identification of locations where impacts cannot be mitigated satisfactorily. An EIS describes significant impacts and tells what the Federal agency intends to do about them. For projects handled with EA's, completion of the environmental review with a finding of no significant impact (FONSI) may depend on mitigation being incorporated in the proposed project. The specific way mitigation is handled in the

environmental document depends on the type of impact (noise or vibration) and the stage of project development and environmental review.

In general, airborne noise impacts can be accurately predicted in the preliminary engineering stage. Since the environmental review for major investment projects is completed during preliminary engineering, it is possible to specify, and commit to implement, any needed noise mitigation measures in the final environmental document (Final EIS or FONSI). With major investments, as well as small projects like bus terminals and garages, it is expected that decisions on noise mitigation will be made before the final document is approved; thus timely development of design, feasibility and cost information needed to reach decisions on noise mitigation is essential. For major investments in the Alternatives Analysis/Draft EIS stage, the emphasis is not on mitigation but rather a broad comparison among the alternatives concerning the magnitude and extent of noise impacts. If it seems likely that mitigation would be required for at least some major investment alternatives, this can be discussed in a general way while touching on the remaining stages of project development and how decisions on mitigation fit in. Finally, there are other projects for which the preferred alternative is identified at the outset in the Draft EIS or EA. With the focus on a single alternative, noise impacts can be accurately identified in the draft document. If mitigation is needed, mitigation options should be explored in the draft; however firm decisions on mitigation can be deferred to the final document.

Predicting vibration impacts accurately is a more complex undertaking because ground-borne vibration may be strongly influenced by subsurface conditions. The geotechnical studies that reveal these conditions are normally undertaken during the final design stage after the NEPA process has been completed. Thus, for ground-borne vibration and noise, the final environmental document will usually not be able to state with certainty whether or not mitigation is needed. The final environmental document will rely on a General Assessment for ground-borne vibration and noise to identify potential problem areas. If there are such areas, there should be a commitment in the final document to conduct a Detailed Analysis during final design to complete the impact assessment and help determine the need for mitigation. The final environmental document should present a preliminary assessment using the vibration impact criteria for the General Assessment. If it appears the criteria cannot be met, the document would discuss various control measures that could be used and the likelihood that the criteria could be met through the use of one or more of the measures. It may be possible to state a commitment in the final environmental document to adhere to the impact criteria for the Detailed Analysis, while deferring the selection of specific vibration control measures until the completion of detailed studies in final design.

After a final environmental document is approved, the described mitigation measures are incorporated by reference in the actual grant agreements signed by FTA and the project sponsor. Thus, they become contractual conditions that must be adhered to by the project sponsor.

13.2.1 Organization of Noise and Vibration Sections of Environmental Documents

Chapter on Affected Environment (Existing Conditions)

This chapter describes the pre-project setting, including the existing noise and vibration conditions, that will likely be affected by one or more of the alternatives. The primary function of this chapter is to establish the focus and baseline conditions for later chapters discussing environmental impacts. Consequently, it is a good place to put basic information on noise and vibration descriptors and effects, as well as describing the characteristics in the vicinity of the project. Again, it is preferable to separate the noise and vibration sections.

- **Description of Noise/Vibration Descriptors, Effects and Typical Levels:** Information from Chapters 2 and 7 of this manual can be used to provide a background for the discussions of noise/vibration levels and characteristics to follow. Illustrative material to guide the reader in understanding typical levels is helpful.
- **Inventory of Noise/Vibration-Sensitive Sites:** The approach for selecting noise/vibration-sensitive sites should be described in sufficient detail to demonstrate completeness. Sites and site descriptions are to be included.
- **Noise/Vibration Measurements:** A summary of the site selection procedure should be included along with tables of sites coordinated with maps showing locations of sites. The measurement approach should be summarized with justification for the measurement procedures used. The measurement data should be presented in well organized form in tables and figures. To save space, the results are often included with the table of sites described above. In some cases, measurements may be supplemented or replaced by collected data relevant to the noise and vibration characteristics of the area. For example, soils information for estimating ground-borne vibration propagation characteristics may be available from other projects in the area. Fundamental to this section is a summary and interpretation of how the collected data define the project setting.

Chapter on Environmental Consequences.

The section on long-term impacts - the impacts due to operation of the project - should be organized according to the following order:

- **Overview of Approach:** A summary of the assessment procedure for determining noise/vibration impacts is provided as a framework for the following sections.
- **Estimated Noise/Vibration Levels:** A general description of prediction models used to estimate project noise/vibration levels should be provided. Any distinguishing features unique to the project, such as source levels associated with various technologies, should be described. The results of the predictions for various alternatives should be described in general terms first, followed by a detailed accounting of predicted noise levels. This information should be supplemented with tables and

illustrated by contours, cross-sections or shaded mapping. If contours are included in a technical report, then it is not necessary to repeat them here.

- **Criteria for Noise/Vibration Impact:** Impact criteria for the project should be fully described and referenced (refer to Chapters 3 and 8). In addition, any applicable local ordinances should be described. Tables listing the criterion levels should be included.
- **Impact Assessment:** The impact assessment can be a section by itself or can be combined with the section above. It is important to provide a description of locations where noise/vibration impact is expected to occur without implementation of mitigation measures, based on the predicted future levels, existing levels and application of the impact criteria. Inventory tables of impacted land uses should be used to quantify the impacts for comparisons among alternatives. The comprehensive list of noise/vibration-sensitive sites identified in the Affected Environment chapter should be included in this inventory table.
- **Noise/Vibration Mitigation Measures:** Perhaps the most significant difference between the technical report and the environmental document is in the area of mitigation. Whereas the technical report discusses options and may make recommendations, the environmental document provides the vehicle for reaching decisions on appropriate mitigation measures with consideration given to environmental benefits, feasibility and cost. This section should begin with a summary of the noise/vibration mitigation measures considered for the impacted locations. The specific measures selected for implementation should be fully described. Reasons for dismissing any abatement measures should also be clearly stated, especially if such non-implementation results in significant adverse effects. In cases where it is not possible to commit to a specific mitigation measure in the final environmental document, it may be possible to commit to a certain level of noise/vibration reduction, for example, adherence to the impact criteria specified in Chapters 3 and 8.
- **Unavoidable Adverse Environmental Effects:** If it is projected that adverse noise/vibration impacts will result after all reasonable abatement measures have been incorporated, these impacts are identified in this section.

Impacts During Construction

The environmental document may have a separate section on short-term impacts due to project construction, depending on the scale of the project. For a major project there may be a special section on construction noise/vibration impacts; this section should be organized according to the comprehensive outline described above. For projects with relatively minor effects, a briefer format should be utilized, with a section included in the chapter on Environmental Consequences.

APPENDICES

APPENDIX A. GLOSSARY OF TERMS^(1, 2)

A-weighting – A standardized filter used to alter the sensitivity of a sound level meter with respect to frequency so that the instrument is less sensitive at low and high frequencies where the human ear is less sensitive. Also written as dBA.

Accelerometer – A transducer that converts vibratory motion to an electrical signal proportional to the acceleration of that motion.

Ambient – The pre-project background noise or vibration level.

Amplitude – Difference between the extremes of an oscillating signal.

Alignment – The horizontal location of a railroad or transit system as described by curved and tangent track.

At-grade – Tracks on the ground surface.

Automated Guideway Transit (AGT) – Guided steel-wheel or rubber-tired transit passenger vehicles operating singly or in multi-car trains with a fully automated system on fixed guideways along an exclusive right-of-way. AGT includes personal rapid transit, group rapid transit and automated people mover systems.

Auxiliaries – The term applied to a number of separately driven machines, operated by power from the main engine or electric generation. They include the air compressor, radiator fan, traction motor blower, and air conditioning equipment.

Ballast mat – A 2- to 3-inch-thick elastomer mat placed under the normal track ballast on top of a rigid slab or packed sub-grade.

Ballast – Granular material placed on the trackbed for the purpose of holding the track in line and at surface.

Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) - A type of limited-stop bus operation that relies on technology to help speed up the service. Buses can operate on exclusive transitways, high-occupancy-vehicle lanes, expressways, or ordinary streets.

Catenary – On electric railroad and light rail transit systems, the term describing the overhead conductor that is contacted by the pantograph or trolley, and its support structure.

Commuter rail – Conventional passenger railroad serving areas surrounding an urban center. Most commuter railroads utilize locomotive-hauled coaches, often in push-pull configuration.

Consist – The total number and type of cars, locomotives, or transit vehicles in a trainset.

Continuous welded rail – A number of rails welded together to form unbroken lengths of track without gaps or joints.

Corrugated rail – A rough condition of alternating ridges and grooves which develops on the rail head in service.

Crest factor - The ratio of peak particle velocity to maximum RMS amplitude in an oscillating signal.

Criteria – Plural form of “criterion,” the relationship between a measure of exposure (e.g., sound or vibration level) and its corresponding effect.

Cross tie – The transverse member of the track structure to which the rails are spiked or otherwise fastened to provide proper gage and to cushion, distribute, and transmit the stresses of traffic through the ballast to the trackbed.

Crossover – Two turnouts with the track between the frogs arranged to form a continuous passage between two nearby and generally parallel tracks.

Cumulative – The summation of individual sounds into a single total value related to the effect over time.

Cut – A term used to describe a trackbed at a lower level than the surrounding ground.

dB – see Decibel.

dBA – see A-weighting.

Decibel – The standard unit of measurement for sound pressure level and vibration level. Technically, a decibel is the unit of level which denotes the ratio between two quantities that are proportional to power; the number of decibels is 10 times the logarithm of this ratio. Also written as dB.

Descriptor – A quantitative metric used to identify a specific measure of sound level.

DMU – Diesel-powered multiple unit. See Multiple Unit.

DNL – see L_{dn} .

Electrification – A term used to describe the installation of overhead wire or third rail power distribution facilities to enable operation of trains.

Embankment – A bank of earth, rock or other material constructed above the natural ground surface.

Equivalent Level – The level of a steady sound which, in a stated time period and at a stated location, has the same sound energy as the time-varying sound. Also written as L_{eq} .

Ferry boat – A transit mode comprised of vessels to carry passengers and/or vehicles over a body of water.

Fixed guideway – A mass transit facility with a separate right-of-way for the exclusive use of public transportation and other high-occupancy vehicles.

Flange – The vertical projection along the inner rim of a wheel that serves, together with the corresponding projection of the mating wheel of a wheel set, to keep the wheel set on the track.

Floating slab – A special track support system for vibration isolation, consisting of concrete slabs supported on resilient elements, usually rubber or similar elastomer.

Frequency – The number of times that a periodically occurring quantity repeats itself in a specified period. With reference to noise and vibration signals, the number of cycles per second.

Frequency spectrum – Distribution of frequency components of a noise or vibration signal.

Frog – A track structure used at the intersection of two running rails to provide support for wheels and passageways for their flanges, thus permitting wheels on either rail to cross the other.

Gage (of track) – The distance between the rails on a track.

Grade crossing – The point where a rail line and a motor vehicle road intersect.

Guideway – Supporting structure to form a track for rolling or magnetically-levitated vehicles.

Head-End Power (HEP) – A system of furnishing electric power for a complete railway train from a single generating plant in the locomotive.

Heavy rail – See Rail Rapid Transit.

Hertz (Hz) -- The unit of acoustic or vibration frequency representing cycles per second.

Hourly Average Sound Level – The time-averaged A-weighted sound level, over a 1-hour period, usually calculated between integral hours. Also written as L_{1h} .

Hybrid Bus – A rubber-tired vehicle that features a hybrid diesel-electric propulsion system. A diesel engine runs an electric generator that powers the entire vehicle including electric drive motors that deliver power to the wheels.

Idle – The speed at which an engine runs when it is not under load.

Intermediate Capacity Transit (ICT) – A transit system with less capacity than rail rapid transit, but more capacity than typical bus operations. Examples of ICT include bus rapid transit (BRT), automated guideway transit (AGT), monorails and trolleys.

Intermodal facility – Junction of two or more modes of transportation where transfers may occur.

Jointed rail – A system of joining rails with steel members designed to unite the abutting ends of contiguous rails.

L_{1h} – see Hourly Average Sound Level

L_{dn} – Day-Night Sound Level. The sound exposure level for a 24-hour day calculated by adding the sound exposure level obtained during the daytime (7 a.m. to 10 p.m.) to 10 times the sound exposure level obtained during the nighttime (10 p.m. to 7 a.m.). This unit is used throughout the U.S. for environmental impact assessment. Also written as DNL.

L_{eq} – see Equivalent Level

Light Rail Transit (LRT) – A mode of public transit with tracked vehicles in multiple units operating in mixed traffic conditions on streets as well as sections of exclusive right-of-way. Vehicles are generally powered by electricity from overhead lines.

Locomotive – A self-propelled, non-revenue rail vehicle designed to convert electrical or mechanical energy into tractive effort to haul railway cars. (see also Power Unit)

Main line – The principal line or lines of a railway.

Maglev – Magnetically-levitated vehicle; a vehicle or train of vehicles with guidance and propulsion provided by magnetic forces. Support can be provided by either an electrodynamic system wherein a moving vehicle is lifted by magnetic forces induced in the guideway, or an electromagnetic system wherein the magnetic lifting forces are actively energized in the guideway.

Maximum Sound Level – The highest exponential-time-average sound level, in decibels, that occurs during a stated time period. Also written as $L_{\max}$. The standardized time periods are 1 second for $L_{\max, \text{slow}}$ and 0.125 second for $L_{\max, \text{fast}}$.

Metric – Measurement value, or descriptor.

Monorail – Guided transit vehicles operating on or suspended from a single rail, beam or tube.

Multiple Unit (MU) – A term referring to the practice of coupling two or more diesel-powered or electric-powered passenger cars together with provision for controlling the traction motors on all units from a single controller.

Noise – Any disagreeable or undesired sound or other audible disturbance.

Octave band – A standardized division of a frequency spectrum in which the interval between two divisions is a frequency ratio of 2.

One-third octave band – A standardized division of a frequency spectrum in which the octave bands are divided into thirds for more detailed information. The interval between center frequencies is a ratio of 1.25.

Pantograph – A device for collecting current from an overhead conductor (catenary), consisting of a jointed frame held up by springs or compressed air and having a current collector at the top.

Park-and-ride facility – A parking garage and/or lot used for parking passengers' automobiles while they use transit agency facilities and vehicles.

Peak factor – see Crest factor.

Plan-and-profile – Mapping used by transportation planners that shows two-dimensional plan views (x- and y- axes) on the same page as two-dimensional profiles (x- and z-axes) of a road or track.

Peak Particle Velocity (ppv) – The peak signal value of an oscillating vibration velocity waveform. Usually expressed in inches/second in the United States.

Peak-to-Peak (P-P) Value – Of an oscillating quantity, the algebraic difference between the extreme values of the quantity.

Power unit – A self-propelled vehicle, running on rails and having one or more electric motors that drive the wheels and thereby propel the locomotive and train. The motors obtain electrical energy either from a rail laid near to, but insulated from, the track rails, or from a wire suspended above the track. Contact with the wire is made by a pantograph mounted on top of the unit.

Pure tone – Sound of a single frequency.

Radius of curvature – A measure of the severity of a curve in a track structure based on the length of the radius of a circle that would be formed if the curve were continued.

Rail – A rolled steel shape, commonly a T-section, designed to be laid end to end in two parallel lines on cross ties or other suitable supports to form a track for railway rolling stock.

Rail Rapid Transit – (often called “Heavy Rail Transit”) A mode of public transit with tracked vehicles in multiple units operating in exclusive rights-of-way. Trains are generally powered by electricity from a third rail alongside the track.

Receiver/Receptor – A stationary far-field position at which noise or vibration levels are specified.

Resonance frequency – The phenomenon that occurs in a structure under conditions of forced vibration such that any change in frequency of excitation results in a decrease in response.

Right-of-Way – Lands or rights used or held for railroad or transit operation.

Root Mean Square (rms) – The square root of the mean-square value of an oscillating waveform, where the mean-square value is obtained by squaring the value of amplitudes at each instant of time and then averaging these values over the sample time.

RMS Velocity Level (L_v) – See “Vibration Velocity Level.”

SEL – see Sound Exposure Level.

Sound Exposure Level – The level of sound accumulated over a given time interval or event. Technically, the sound exposure level is the level of the time-integrated mean square A-weighted sound for a stated time interval or event, with a reference time of one second. Also written as SEL.

Sound – A physical disturbance in a medium that is capable of being detected by the human ear.

Spectrum – See Frequency Spectrum.

Sub-Ballast – Any material of a superior character, which is spread on the finished subgrade of the roadbed and below the top-ballast, to provide better drainage, prevent upheaval by frost, and better distribute the load over the roadbed.

Subgrade – The finished surface of the roadbed below the ballast and track.

Suburban bus – Bus similar to an intercity bus with high-backed seats but no luggage compartment, used in express mode to city centers from suburban locations.

Switch – A track structure used to divert rolling stock from one track to another.

Tangent Track – Track without curvature.

Track – An assembly of rail, ties and fastenings over which cars, locomotives, and trains are moved.

Traction Motor – A specially designed direct current series-wound motor mounted on the trucks of locomotives and self-propelled cars to drive the axles.

Trainset – A group of coupled cars including at least one power unit.

Transducer – Device designed to receive an input signal of a given kind (motion, pressure, heat, etc.) and to provide an output signal of a different kind (electrical voltage, amperage, etc.) in such a manner that desired characteristics of the input signal appear in the output signal for measurement purposes.

Transit center – A fixed location where passengers interchange from one route or vehicle to another.

Trolley bus – A rubber-tired, electrically-powered bus operating on city streets drawing power from overhead lines.

Truck – The complete assembly of parts including wheels, axles, bearings, side frames, bolster, brake rigging, springs and all associated connecting components, the function of which is to provide support, mobility and guidance to a railroad car or locomotive.

Trunk line – See Mainline. The mainline of a commuter railroad where the branch line traffic is combined.

Turnout – An arrangement of a switch and a frog with closure rails, by means of which rolling stock may be diverted from one track to another.

VdB – see Vibration Velocity Level.

Vibration Velocity Level (L_v) – Ten times the common logarithm of the ratio of the square of the amplitude of the RMS vibration velocity to the square of the amplitude of the reference RMS vibration velocity. The reference velocity in the United States is one micro-inch per second. Also written as VdB.

Vibration – An oscillation wherein the quantity is a parameter that defines the motion of a mechanical system.

Wheel Flat – A localized flat area on a steel wheel of a rail vehicle, usually caused by skidding on steel rails, causing a discontinuity in the wheel radius.

Wheel Squeal – The noise produced by wheel-rail interaction, particularly on a curve where the radius of curvature is smaller than allowed by the separation of the axles in a wheel set.

REFERENCES

1. American National Standards Institute, “Acoustical Terminology,” ANSI S1.1-1994
2. American Public Transportation Association, “Public Transportation Factbook,” 55th Edition, March 2004.

APPENDIX B. BACKGROUND FOR TRANSIT NOISE IMPACT CRITERIA

The noise criteria, presented in Chapter 3 of this manual, have been developed based on well-documented criteria and research into human response to community noise. The primary goals in developing the noise criteria were to ensure that the impact limits be firmly founded in scientific studies, be realistically based on noise levels associated with new transit projects, and represent a reasonable balance between community benefit and project costs. This appendix provides the background information.

B.1 RELEVANT LITERATURE

Following is an annotated list of the documents that are particularly relevant to the noise impact criteria:

1. US Environmental Protection Agency "Levels Document".⁽¹⁾ This report identifies noise levels consistent with the protection of public health and welfare against hearing loss, annoyance, and activity interference. It has been used as the basis of numerous community noise standards and ordinances.
2. CHABA Working Group 69, "Guidelines for Preparing Environmental Impact Statements on Noise".⁽²⁾ This report was the result of deliberations by a group of leading acoustical scientists with the goal of developing a uniform national method for noise impact assessment. Although the CHABA's proposed approach has not been adopted, the report serves as an excellent resource documenting research in noise effects. It provides a strong scientific basis for quantifying impacts in terms of L_{dn} .
3. American Public Transit Association Guidelines.⁽³⁾ The noise and vibration sections of the APTA Guidelines have been used successfully in the past for the design of rail transit facilities. The APTA Guidelines include criteria for acceptable community noise and vibration. Experience has shown that meeting the APTA Guidelines will usually result in acceptable noise levels. However, there are some problems in using the APTA Guidelines for environmental assessment purposes. The criteria are in terms of L_{max} for conventional rail rapid transit vehicles and they cannot be used to compare among

different modes of transit. Since the APTA Guidelines are expressed in terms of maximum passby noise, they are not sensitive to the frequency or duration of noise events for transit modes other than conventional rail rapid transit operations with 5- to 10-minute headways. Therefore, the APTA criteria are questionable for assessing the noise impact of other transit modes which differ from conventional rapid transit with respect to source emission levels and operating characteristics (e.g., commuter rail, AGT and a variety of bus projects).

4. "Synthesis of Social Surveys on Noise Annoyance":⁽⁴⁾ In 1978, Theodore J. Schultz, an internationally known acoustical scientist, synthesized the results of a large number of social surveys, each concerning annoyance due to transportation noise. Remarkable consistency was found in a group of these surveys, and the author proposed that their average results be taken as the best available prediction of transportation noise annoyance. This synthesis has received essentially unanimous acceptance by acoustical scientists and engineers. The "universal" transportation response curve developed by Schultz (Figure 2-7) shows that the percent of the population highly annoyed by transportation noise increases from zero at an L_{dn} of approximately 50 dBA to 100-percent when L_{dn} is about 90 dBA. Most significantly, this curve indicates that for the same increase in L_{dn} , there is a greater increase in the number of people highly annoyed at high noise levels than at low noise levels. In other words, a 5 dB increase at low ambient levels (40 - 50 dB) has less impact than at higher ambient levels (65 - 75 dB). A recent update of the original research, containing several railroad, transit and street traffic noise surveys, confirmed the shape of the original Schultz curve.⁽⁵⁾
5. HUD Standards:⁽⁶⁾ The U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development has developed noise standards, criteria and guidelines to ensure that housing projects supported by HUD achieve the goal of a suitable living environment. The HUD site acceptability standards define 65 dB (L_{dn}) as the threshold for a normally unacceptable living environment and 75 dB (L_{dn}) as the threshold for an unacceptable living environment.

B.2 BASIS FOR NOISE IMPACT CRITERIA CURVES

The lower curve in Figure 3-1 representing the onset of Moderate Impact is based on the following considerations:

- The EPA finding that a community noise level of L_{dn} less than or equal to 55 dBA is "requisite to protect public health and welfare with an adequate margin of safety."⁽¹⁾
- The conclusion by EPA and others that a 5 dB increase in L_{dn} or L_{eq} is the minimum required for a change in community reaction.
- The research finding that there are very few people highly annoyed when the L_{dn} is 50 dBA, and that an increase in L_{dn} from 50 dBA to 55 dBA results in an average of 2% more people highly annoyed (see Figure 2-10 in Chapter 2).

Consequently, the change in noise level from an existing ambient level of 50 dBA to a cumulative level of 55 dBA caused by a project is assumed to be a minimal impact. Expressed another way, this is considered to be the lowest threshold where impact starts to occur. Moreover, the 2% increment represents the minimum measurable change in community reaction. Thus the curve's hinge point is placed at a project noise level of 53 dBA and an existing ambient noise level of 50 dBA, the combination of which yields a cumulative level of 55 dBA. The remainder of the lower curve in Figure 3-1 was determined from the annoyance curve (Figure 2-10) by allowing a fixed 2% increase in annoyance at other levels of existing ambient noise. As cumulative noise increases, it takes a smaller and smaller increment to attain the same 2% increase in highly annoyed people. While it takes a 5 dB noise increase to cause a 2% increase in highly annoyed people at an existing ambient noise level of 50 dB, an increase of only 1 dB causes the 2% increase of highly annoyed people at an existing ambient noise level of 70 dB.

The upper curve delineating the onset of Severe Impact was developed in a similar manner, except that it was based on a total noise level corresponding to a higher degree of impact. The Severe Noise Impact curve is based on the following considerations:

- The Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) in its environmental noise standards defines an L_{dn} of 65 as the onset of a normally unacceptable noise zone.⁽⁶⁾ Moreover, the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) considers that residential land uses are not compatible with noise environments where L_{dn} is greater than 65 dBA.⁽⁷⁾
- The common use of a 5 dBA increase in L_{dn} or L_{eq} as the minimum required for a change in community reaction.
- The research finding that the foregoing step represents a 6.5% increase in the number of people highly annoyed (see Figure 2-10 in Chapter 2).

Consequently, the increase in noise level from an existing ambient level of 60 dBA to a cumulative level of 65 dBA caused by a project represents a change from an acceptable noise environment to the threshold of an unacceptable noise environment. This is considered to be the level at which severe impact starts to occur. Moreover, the 6.5% increment represents the change in community reaction associated with severe impact. Thus the upper curve's hinge point is placed at a project noise level of 63 dBA and existing ambient noise level of 60 dBA, the combination of which yields a cumulative level of 65 dBA. The remainder of the upper curve in Figure 3-1 was determined from the annoyance curve (Figure 2-10) by fixing the 6.5% increase in annoyance at all existing ambient noise levels.

Both curves incorporate a maximum limit for the transit project noise in noise-sensitive areas. Independent of existing noise levels, Moderate Impact for land use categories 1 and 2 is considered to occur whenever the transit L_{dn} equals or exceeds 65 dBA and Severe Impact occurs whenever the transit L_{dn} equals or exceeds 75 dBA. These absolute limits are intended to restrict activity interference caused by the transit project alone.

Both curves also incorporate a maximum limit for cumulative noise increase at low existing noise levels (below about 45 dBA). This is a conservative measure that reflects the lack of social survey data on people's reaction to noise at such low ambient levels. Similar to the FHWA approach in assessing the relative impact of a highway project, the transit noise criteria include caps on noise increase of 10 dB and 15 dB for Moderate Impact and Severe Impact, respectively, relative to the existing noise level.

Finally, it should be noted that due to the types of land use included in Category 3, the criteria allow the project noise for Category 3 sites to be 5 decibels greater than for Category 1 and Category 2 sites. This difference is reflected by the offset in the vertical scale on the right side of Figure 3-1. With the exception of active parks, which are clearly less sensitive to noise than Category 1 and 2 sites, Category 3 sites include primarily indoor activities and thus the criteria account for some noise reduction provided by the building structure.

B.3 EQUATIONS FOR NOISE IMPACT CRITERIA CURVES

The noise impact criteria can be quantified through the use of mathematical equations which approximate the curves shown in Figure 3-1. These equations may be useful when performing the noise assessment methodology through the use of spreadsheets, computer programs or other analysis tools. Otherwise, such mathematical detail is generally not necessary in order to properly implement the criteria, and direct use of Figure 3-1 is likely to be adequate and less time-consuming.

A total of four continuous curves are obtained from the criteria: two threshold curves ("Moderate Impact" and "Severe Impact") for Category 1 and 2; and two for Category 3. Note that for each level of impact, the overall curves for Categories 1 and 2 are offset by 5 dB from Category 3. While each curve is graphically continuous, it is defined by a set of three discrete equations which represent three "regimes" of existing noise exposure. These equations are approximately continuous at the transition points between regimes.

The first equation in each set is a linear relationship, representing the portion of the curve in which the existing noise exposure is low and the allowable increase is capped at 10 dB and 15 dB for Moderate Impact and Severe Impact, respectively. The second equation in each set represents the impact threshold over the range of existing noise exposure for which a fixed percentage of increase in annoyance is allowed, as described in the previous section. This curve, a third-order polynomial approximation derived from the Schultz curve,⁽⁴⁾ covers the range of noise exposure encountered in most populated areas and is used in determining noise impact in the majority of cases for transit projects. Finally, the third equation in each of the four sets represents the absolute limit of project noise imposed by the criteria, for areas with high existing noise exposure. For land use category 1 and 2, this limit is 65 dBA for Moderate Impact and 70 dBA for Severe Impact. For land use category 3, the limit is 75 dBA for Moderate Impact and 80 dBA for Severe Impact.

The four sets of equations corresponding to the curves are given below. Each curve represents a threshold of noise impact, with impact indicated for points on or above the curve.

Threshold of Moderate Impact :

$$L_P = \begin{cases} 11.450 + 0.953L_E & L_E < 42 \\ 71.662 - 1.164L_E + 0.018L_E^2 - 4.088 \times 10^{-5}L_E^3 & 42 \leq L_E \leq 71 \\ 65 & L_E > 71 \end{cases} \left. \vphantom{\begin{matrix} L_P \\ L_E \end{matrix}} \right\} \text{Category 1 and 2}$$

$$L_P = \begin{cases} 16.450 + 0.953L_E & L_E < 42 \\ 76.662 - 1.164L_E + 0.018L_E^2 - 4.088 \times 10^{-5}L_E^3 & 42 \leq L_E \leq 71 \\ 70 & L_E > 71 \end{cases} \left. \vphantom{\begin{matrix} L_P \\ L_E \end{matrix}} \right\} \text{Category 3}$$

Threshold of Severe Impact :

$$L_P = \begin{cases} 17.322 + 0.940L_E & L_E < 44 \\ 96.725 - 1.992L_E + 3.02 \times 10^{-2}L_E^2 - 1.043 \times 10^{-4}L_E^3 & 44 \leq L_E \leq 77 \\ 75 & L_E > 77 \end{cases} \left. \vphantom{\begin{matrix} L_P \\ L_E \end{matrix}} \right\} \text{Category 1 and 2}$$

$$L_P = \begin{cases} 22.322 + 0.940L_E & L_E < 44 \\ 101.725 - 1.992L_E + 3.02 \times 10^{-2}L_E^2 - 1.043 \times 10^{-4}L_E^3 & 44 \leq L_E \leq 77 \\ 80 & L_E > 77 \end{cases} \left. \vphantom{\begin{matrix} L_P \\ L_E \end{matrix}} \right\} \text{Category 3}$$

where L_E is the existing noise exposure in terms of L_{dn} or $L_{eq}(h)$ and L_P is the project noise exposure which determines impact, also in terms of L_{dn} or $L_{eq}(h)$.

REFERENCES

1. U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, "Information on Levels of Environmental Noise Requisite to Protect Public Health and Welfare with an Adequate Margin of Safety," EPA report number 550/9-74-004, March 1974.
2. National Academy of Sciences, "Guidelines for Preparing Environmental Impact Statements on Noise," Report from Committee on Bioacoustics and Biomechanics (CHABA) Working Group 69, February 1977.
3. American Public Transit Association, *1981 Guidelines for Design of Rapid Transit Facilities*, Section 2.7, "Noise and Vibration," 1981.
4. T.J. Schultz, "Synthesis of Social Surveys on Noise Annoyance," *Journal of the Acoustical Society of America*, Vol. 64, No. 2, pp. 377-405, August 1978.
5. S. Fidell, D.S. Barber and T.J. Schultz, "Updating a Dosage-Effect Relationship for the Prevalence of Annoyance Due to General Transportation Noise," *Journal of the Acoustical Society of America*, Vol. 89, No. 1, January 1991.
6. U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, "Environmental Criteria and Standards", 24 CFR Part 51,v 12 July 1979; amended by 49 FR 880, 6 January 1984.
7. U.S. Department of Transportation, Federal Aviation Administration, "Federal Aviation Regulations Part 150: Airport Noise Compatibility Planning," January 1981.

APPENDIX C. SELECTING RECEIVERS OF INTEREST

This appendix provides additional detail in selecting receivers of interest for those users desiring such detail. The general approach given in Chapter 6 includes the following guidelines:

- Every major public building or site with noise-sensitive indoor use within the noise study area should be selected as a separate receiver of interest.
- Each isolated residence and small outdoor noise-sensitive area within the noise study area should be selected as a separate receiver of interest in the same manner as for public buildings.
- In contrast, groups of residences and larger outdoor noise-sensitive areas within the noise study area should be "clustered" and a receiver of interest selected from each cluster. Clustering reduces the number of computations later needed, especially for large-scale projects where a great number of noise-sensitive sites may be affected. For this approach to work, however, it is essential that the receiver selected provide an accurate representation of the noise environment of the cluster.

This appendix elaborates on the clustering procedure. In brief: (1) Cluster boundaries are first drawn relative to the proposed project, either running parallel to a linear project or circling major stationary sources. These boundaries approximate contours of equal project noise. (2) Then a separate set of cluster boundaries is drawn parallel to, or circling, major sources of ambient noise to approximate contours of ambient noise. (3) Finally, a third set of cluster boundaries may further subdivide the noise study area, if there are changes in project layout or operations along the corridor.

Following are suggested procedures for drawing cluster boundaries and for selecting a receiver of interest from each cluster:

Boundaries along the proposed project. First draw cluster boundaries along the proposed project, to separate clusters based upon distance from the project. Draw such cluster boundaries for all sources that are listed as "Major" in Table 6-2.

Within both residential and noise-sensitive outdoor areas:

- **Primary project source.** Draw cluster boundaries at the following distances from the near edge of the primary project source: 0 feet, 50 feet, 100 feet, 200 feet, 400 feet, and 800 feet. If the primary project source is a linear source, such as a rail line, draw these boundaries as lines parallel to the proposed right-of-way line. Around major stationary sources, draw these boundaries as approximate circles around the source, starting at the property line. Do not extend boundaries beyond the noise study area, identified in the Screening Procedure of Chapter 4 or the General Assessment of Chapter 5.
- **Remaining project sources.** Repeat this for all other project sources listed as Major in Table 6-2, such as substations and crossing signals. If several project sources are located approximately together, only one need be considered here, since the others would produce approximately the same boundaries. It is good practice to optimize the number of clusters for a project, to avoid needlessly complicating the procedure.

Where rows of buildings parallel the transit corridor:

- Check that cluster boundaries fall between the following rows of buildings, counting back away from the proposed project:

Between rows 1 and 2

Between rows 2 and 3

Between rows 4 and 5

If not, add cluster boundaries between these rows.

Boundaries along sources of ambient noise. Next, draw cluster boundaries along all major sources of ambient noise, based upon distance from these sources.

- Along all interstates and major roadway arterials, draw cluster boundaries at the following distances from the near edge of the roadway: 0 feet, 100 feet, 200 feet, and 500 feet.
- Along all other roadways that have state or county numbering, draw cluster boundaries at 0 feet and 100 feet from the near edge of the roadway.
- For all major industrial sources of noise, draw cluster boundaries that circle the source, at the following distances from the near property line of the source: 0 feet, 100 feet, 200 feet, 400 feet.

Further boundaries based upon changes in project layout or operations along the corridor. Where proposed project layout or operating conditions change significantly along the corridor, further subdivision is needed to account for changes in project noise. Draw a cluster boundary perpendicular to the corridor, extending straight outward to both sides, at the following locations:

- Where parallel tracks, previously separated by more than 100 feet or so, come closer together
- Approximately where speed and/or throttle is reduced approaching stations and where steady service speed is reached after departing stations.
- Approximately 200 feet up and down the line from grade-crossing bells
- At transitions from jointed to welded rail
- At transitions from one type of cross section to another -- from among these types: on structure, on fill, at grade, and in cut.
- At transitions from open terrain to heavily wooded terrain
- At transitions between areas free of locomotive-horn noise and areas subject to this noise source
- Any other positions along the line where project noise is expected to change significantly -- such as up and down the line from tight curves where wheels may squeal

Selection of a receiver of interest from each cluster. The cluster boundaries divide the land area into clusters of miscellaneous shape. Each of these pieces constitutes an area that will be represented by a single receiver of interest.

- For residential clusters, locate this receiver of interest within the cluster at the house closest to the proposed project. If in doubt, select the one furthest from significant sources of ambient noise.
- For outdoor noise-sensitive clusters, such as an urban park or amphitheater, locate this receiver of interest within the cluster at the closest point of active noise-sensitive use. If in doubt, select the one furthest from significant sources of ambient noise.

In following the foregoing procedures, some clusters may fall between areas with receivers of interest. This could occur, for example, when operational changes or track layouts change in an open undeveloped area. Retain such clusters -- that is, do not merge them with adjacent ones -- but do not select a receiver of interest from them.

Example C-1. Receivers of Interest and Cluster Boundaries

An example of receivers of interest and cluster boundaries is shown in Figure C-1. In this hypothetical situation, a new rail transit line, labeled "new rail line," is proposed along a major urban street with commercial land use. A residential area is located adjacent to the commercial strip, starting about one-half block from the proposed transit alignment. A major arterial, labeled "highway," crosses the alignment.

Following the procedure described in this appendix, the first step is to draw cluster boundaries along the **proposed primary project source** (in this case, the new rail line) at distances of 0 feet from the right-of-way line (edge of the street in this example), 50 feet, 100 feet, 200 feet, 400 feet, and 800 feet. These lines are shown with distances labeled at the top of the figure. This is proposed to be a constant speed section of track, so there are no changes in boundaries due to changes in operations along the corridor. Moreover, no **other project sources** are shown here, although if there had been a station with a parking lot, lines would have been drawn enveloping the station site at the specified distances from the property line. However, this example does show **rows of buildings parallel** to the transit corridor. The first set of lines satisfies the requirement that cluster boundaries fall between rows 1 and 2, and between rows 2 and 3, but there is no line between rows 4 and 5. Consequently, a cluster boundary (labeled "R" at the top of the figure) has been drawn between the 4th and 5th row of buildings.

Next, cluster boundaries are to be drawn along major sources of ambient noise. The roadway arterial (labeled "highway") is the only major source of ambient noise shown. Again following the procedure described in this appendix, cluster boundaries are drawn at 0 feet, 100 feet, 200 feet and 500 feet from the near edge of the roadway, both sides. These lines are shown with distances labeled at the side of the figure.

The foregoing describes the procedures for drawing all the lines defining the cluster boundaries shown in Figure C-1. The next step is to **select a receiver of interest within each cluster**. These are shown as filled circles in the figure. Some receivers of interest are labeled for use as examples in Appendix D. Taking the shaded cluster with "Rec 3" as an example: the cluster is located at the outer edge of influence from the major source ("highway"), where local street traffic takes over from the highway as the dominant source for ambient noise, which would be verified by a measurement. "Rec 3" is chosen to represent this cluster because it is among the houses closest to the proposed project source in this cluster and it is in the middle of the block affected by the dominant local street. Ambient noise levels at one end of the cluster may be influenced more by the highway and the other end may be affected more by the cross street, but the majority of the cluster would be represented by receiver site "Rec 3."

End of Example C-1

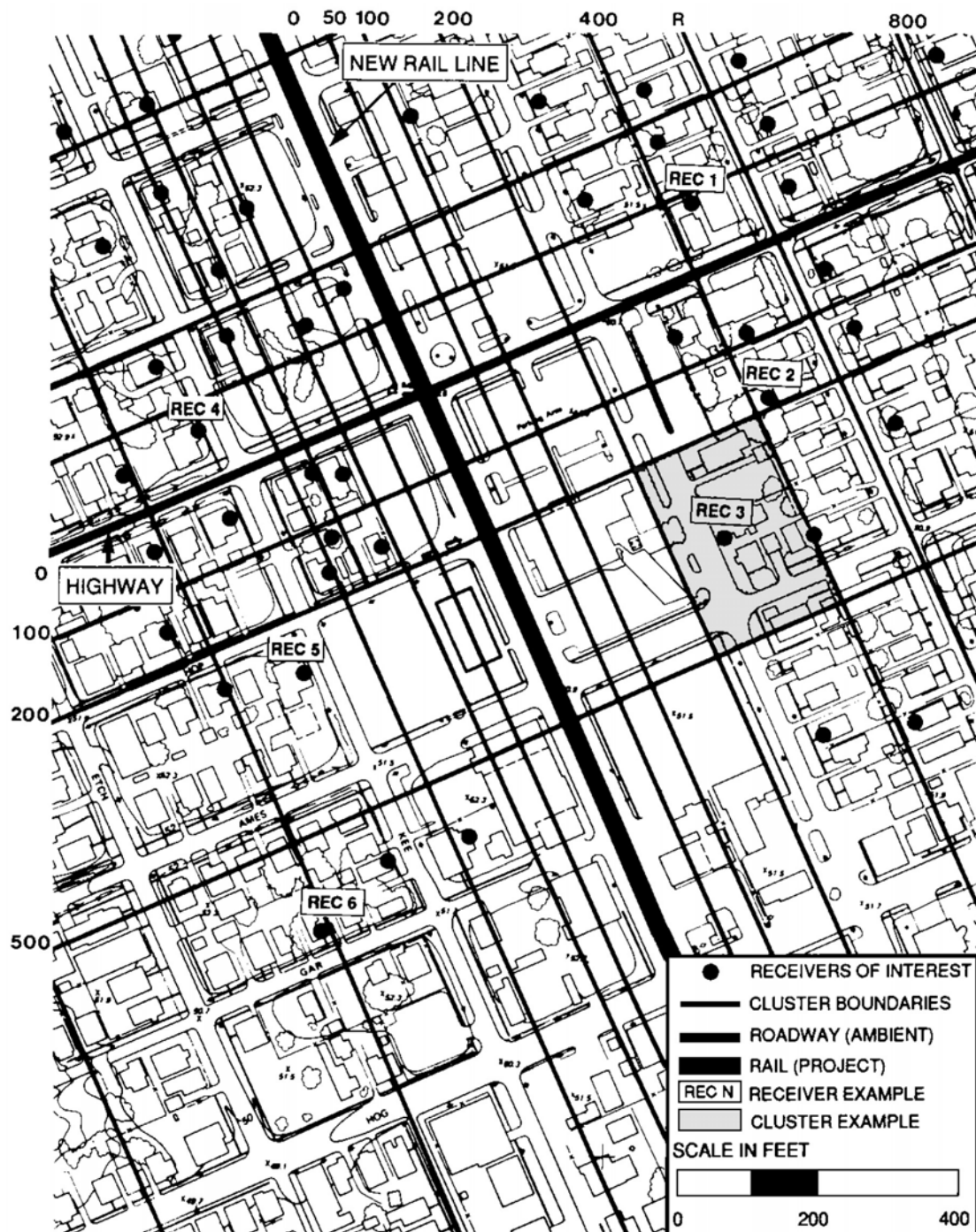


Figure C-1. Example of Receiver Map Showing Cluster Boundaries

APPENDIX D. DETERMINING EXISTING NOISE

This appendix provides additional detail in determining existing noise by: (1) full measurement, (2) computation from partial measurements, and (3) tabular look-up. Note that the words "existing noise" and "ambient noise" are often used interchangeably.

Continuing with the example from Figure C-1, the ambient noise at the selected receivers of interest, labeled "REC 1,2,3...", can be determined according to the following methods.

- Existing noise at REC 1 is due to the highway at the side of this church. L_{eq} during a typical church hour was measured in full. – OPTION 1 below
- Existing noise at REC 2, a residence, is due to a combination of the highway and local streets. L_{dn} was measured in full. – OPTION 2 below
- Existing noise at REC 3 is due to the street in front of this residence. L_{dn} was computed from three hourly L_{eq} measurements. – OPTION 3 below
- Existing noise at REC 4, a residence, is due to the highway. Since the highway has a predictable diurnal pattern, L_{dn} was computed from one hourly L_{eq} measurement. – OPTION 4 below
- Existing noise at REC 5, a residence, is due to Kee Street. L_{dn} was computed from L_{dn} at the comparable REC 3, which is also affected by local street traffic and is a comparable distance from the highway. – OPTION 5 below
- Existing noise at REC 6, a residence, is due to local traffic. L_{dn} was estimated by table look-up, based upon population density along this corridor. – OPTION 6 below

The full set of options for determining existing noise at receivers of interest is as follows:

- For non-residential land uses, measure a full hour's L_{eq} at the receiver of interest, during a typical hour of use on two non-successive days. The hour chosen should be the one in which maximum project activity will occur. The L_{eq} will be accurately represented.-- OPTION 1

- The three options for residential land uses are:
 - Measure a full day's L_{dn} . The L_{dn} will be accurately represented. – OPTION 2
 - Measure the hourly L_{eq} for three typical hours: peak traffic, midday and late night. Then compute the L_{dn} from these three hourly L_{eq} 's. The computed L_{dn} will be slightly underestimated. – OPTION 3
 - Measure the hourly L_{eq} for one hour of the day only, preferably during midday. Then compute the L_{dn} from this hourly L_{eq} . The computed L_{dn} will be moderately underestimated. – OPTION 4
- For all land uses, compute either the L_{eq} or the L_{dn} from a measured value at a nearby receiver – one where the ambient noise is dominated by the same noise source. The computed value will be represented with only moderate precision. – OPTION 5
- For all land uses, estimate either the L_{eq} or the L_{dn} from a table of typical values, depending upon distance from major roadways or upon population density. The resulting values will be significantly underestimated. – OPTION 6

Option 1: For non-residential land uses, measure the hourly L_{eq} for the hour of interest

Full one-hour measurements are the most precise way to determine existing noise for non-residential receivers of interest. Such full-duration measurements are preferred over all other options. The following procedures apply to full-duration measurements:

- Measure a full hour's L_{eq} at the receiver of interest on at least two non-successive days during a typical hour of use. This would generally be between noon Monday and noon Friday, but weekend days may be appropriate for places of worship. On both days, the measured hour must be the same as that for which project noise is computed: the loudest facility hour that overlaps hours of noise-sensitive activity at the receiver.
- At all sites, locate the measurement microphone as shown in Figure 6-9, depending upon the relative orientation of project and ambient sources. Desired is a microphone location that is shielded somewhat from the ambient source. At such locations, ambient noise will be measured at the quietest location on the property for purposes of noise impact assessment so that noise impact will be assessed most critically.
- Undertake all measurements in accordance with good engineering practice.

Option 2: For residential land uses, measure the L_{dn} for a full 24 hours

Full 24-hour measurements are the most precise way to determine ambient noise for residential receivers of interest. Such full-duration measurements are preferred over all other options. The following procedures apply to full-duration measurements:

- Measure a full 24-hour's L_{dn} at the receiver of interest, for a single weekday (generally between noon Monday and noon Friday).
- At all sites, locate the measurement microphone as shown in Figure 6-9, depending upon the relative orientation of project and ambient sources. Desired is a microphone location that is shielded somewhat from the ambient source. At such locations, ambient noise will be measured at the quietest location on the property for purposes of noise impact assessment so that noise impact will be assessed most critically.
- Undertake all measurements in accordance with good engineering practice.

Option 3: For residential land uses, measure the hourly L_{eq} for three hours and then compute L_{dn}

An alternative way to determine L_{dn} , less precise than its full-duration measurement, is to measure hourly L_{eq} 's for three typical hours of the day and then to compute the L_{dn} from these three hourly L_{eq} 's. The following procedures apply to this partial-duration measurement option for L_{dn} :

- Measure the one-hour L_{eq} during each of the following time periods: once during peak-hour roadway traffic, once midday between the morning and afternoon roadway-traffic peak hours, and once during late night between midnight and 5 am.
- Compute L_{dn} with the following equation:

$$L_{dn} \approx 10 \log \left[(3) \cdot 10^{\frac{L_{eq}(\text{peakhour})-2}{10}} + (12) \cdot 10^{\frac{L_{eq}(\text{midday})-2}{10}} + (9) \cdot 10^{\frac{L_{eq}(\text{latenight})+8}{10}} \right] - 13.8$$

This value of L_{dn} will be slightly underestimated due to the subtraction of 2 decibels from each of the measured levels before their combination. As explained previously, this underestimate is intended to compensate for the reduced precision of the computed L_{dn} here, compared to its full-duration measurement.

- At all sites, locate the measurement microphone as shown in Figure 6-9, depending upon the relative orientation of project and ambient sources. Desired is a microphone location that is shielded somewhat from the ambient source. At such locations, ambient noise will be measured at the quietest location on the property for purposes of noise impact assessment so that noise impact will be assessed most critically.
- Undertake all measurements in accordance with good engineering practice.

Option 4: For residential land uses, measure the hourly L_{eq} for one hour and then compute L_{dn}

The next level down in precision is to determine L_{dn} by measuring the hourly L_{eq} for one hour of the day and then to compute L_{dn} from this hourly L_{eq} . This method is useful when there are many sites in a General

Assessment, or when checking whether a particular receiver of interest represents a cluster in a Detailed Analysis. The following procedures apply to this partial-duration measurement option for L_{dn} :

- Measure the one-hour L_{eq} during any hour of the day. The loudest hour during the daytime period is preferable. If this hour is not selected, then other hours may be used with less precision.
- Convert the measured hourly L_{eq} to L_{dn} with the applicable equation:

For measurements between 7am and 7pm :	$L_{dn} \approx L_{eq} - 2$
For measurements between 7pm and 10pm :	$L_{dn} \approx L_{eq} + 3$
For measurements between 10pm and 7am :	$L_{dn} \approx L_{eq} + 8$

The resulting value of L_{dn} will be moderately underestimated due to the use of the adjustment constants in these equations. As explained previously, this underestimate is intended to compensate for the reduced precision of the computed L_{dn} here, compared to the more precise methods of determining L_{dn} .

- At all sites, locate the measurement microphone as shown in Figure 6-9, depending upon the relative orientation of project and existing sources. Desired is a microphone location that is shielded somewhat from the ambient source. At such locations, ambient noise will be measured at the quietest location on the property for purposes of noise impact assessment so that noise impact will be assessed most critically.
- Undertake all measurements in accordance with good engineering practice

Option 5: For all land uses, compute either L_{eq} or L_{dn} from a nearby measured value

A computation method comparable in precision to Option 4 is to determine the ambient noise, either $L_{eq}(h)$ or L_{dn} , from a measured value at a nearby receiver – one where the ambient noise is dominated by the same noise source. This method is used to characterize noise in several neighborhoods by using a single representative receiver. Care must be taken to ensure that the measurement site has a similar noise environment to all areas represented. If measurements made by others are available, and the sites are equivalent, they can be used to reduce the amount of project noise monitoring. The following procedures apply to this computation of ambient noise at the receiver of interest:

- Choose another receiver of interest, called the "comparable receiver," at which:
 - o The same source of ambient noise dominates.
 - o The ambient $L_{CompRec}$ was measured with either OPTION 1 or OPTION 2 above.
 - o The ambient measurement at the comparable receiver was made in direct view of the major source of ambient noise, unshielded from it by noise barriers, terrain, rows of buildings, or dense tree zones.

- From a plan or aerial photograph, determine: (1) the distance $D_{\text{Comp Rec}}$ from the comparable receiver to the near edge of the ambient source, and (2) the distance $D_{\text{This Rec}}$ from this receiver of interest to the near edge of the ambient source.
- Also determine N, the number of rows of buildings that intervene between the receiver of interest and the ambient source.
- Compute the ambient level at this receiver of interest with the applicable equation:

$$\text{If roadway sources dominate: } L_{\text{This Rec}} \approx L_{\text{Comp Rec}} - 15 \log \left(\frac{D_{\text{This Rec}}}{D_{\text{Comp Rec}}} \right) - 3N$$

$$\text{If other sources dominate: } L_{\text{This Rec}} \approx L_{\text{Comp Rec}} - 25 \log \left(\frac{D_{\text{This Rec}}}{D_{\text{Comp Rec}}} \right) - 3N$$

The resulting value of $L_{\text{This Rec}}$ will be moderately underestimated. As explained previously, this underestimate is intended to compensate for the reduced precision of the computed L_{dn} here, compared to the more precise methods of determining ambient noise levels.

Option 6: For all land uses, estimate either $L_{\text{eq}}(\text{h})$ or L_{dn} from a table of typical values

The least precise way to determine the ambient noise is to estimate it from a table. A tabular look-up can be used to establish baseline conditions for a General Noise Assessment if a noise measurement can not be made. It should not be used for a Detailed Noise Analysis. For this estimate of ambient noise:

- Read the ambient noise estimate from the relevant portion of Table 5-7. These tabulated estimates depend upon distance from major roadways, rail lines or upon population densities. In general, these tabulated values are significant underestimates. As explained previously, underestimates here are intended to compensate for the reduced precision of the estimated ambients, compared to the options that incorporate some degree of measurements.

APPENDIX E. COMPUTING SOURCE REFERENCE LEVELS FROM MEASUREMENTS

This appendix contains the procedures for computing source reference levels (SEL_{ref}) from source measurements in cases where the Source Reference Tables in Chapter 6 indicate measurements are preferred.

For vehicle passbys, the closeby source measurements may be either of the vehicle's sound exposure level (SEL) or of its maximum noise level (L_{max}). Both these descriptors can be measured directly by commonly available sound level meters. L_{max} 's are allowed here for several reasons. Often L_{max} measurements are available from transit-equipment manufacturers. For some transit systems, equipment specifications will limit closeby L_{max} 's to some particular value. And in some situations, closeby source measurements may be taken as part of the environmental study for more precision than is possible with the reference-level table.

For non-passby sources, the closeby source measurements must be of the source's SEL over one source "event." The source "event" duration may be chosen for measurement convenience; it will subtract out of the computation when the measured value is converted to reference operating conditions later in this section.

This manual does not specify elaborate methods for undertaking such closeby source measurements, nor that these measurements be at the reference conditions discussed in the main text. Required are measurements that conform to good engineering practice, guided by the standards of the American National Standards Institute and other such organizations (see References 2, 3 and 4 of Chapter 6).

For passbys of both highway and rail vehicles, the following conditions are required in addition to good engineering practice:

- Measured vehicles must be representative of project vehicles in all aspects, including representative acceleration and speed conditions for buses.

- Track must be relatively free of corrugations and train wheels relatively free of flats, unless these conditions are typical of the proposed project.
- Road surfaces must be smooth and dry, unless these conditions are typical of the proposed project.
- Perpendicular distance between the measurement position and the source's centerline must be 100 feet or less.
- Vehicle speed must be 30 miles per hour or greater, unless typical project speeds are less than that.
- No noise barriers, terrain, buildings, or dense tree zones may break the lines-of-sight between the source and the measurement position.

For sources other than vehicle passbys, the following conditions are required in addition to good engineering practice:

- Measured source operations must be representative of project operations in all aspects.
- The following ratio must be 2 or less:

$$\frac{\text{distance to the furthest source component}}{\text{distance to the closest source component}}$$

In addition, the distance to the closest source component must be 200 feet or less. If both these conditions cannot simultaneously be met, then separate closeby measurements must be made of individual components of this source, for which these distance conditions can be met.

- The following ratio must be 2 or less:

$$\frac{\text{lateral length of the source area, measured perpendicular to the general line-of-sight between source and measurement position}}{\text{distance to the closest source component}}$$

If this condition cannot be met, then separate closeby measurements must be made of individual components of this source, for which this condition can be met.

- No noise barriers, terrain, buildings, or dense tree zones may break the lines-of-sight between the source and the measurement position.

When closeby source measurements are made under non-reference conditions, the equations in Table E-1 are used to convert the measured values to Source Reference Levels. Detailed procedures follow. Note that each vehicle type must be measured and converted separately. Note that this computation requires that all measured vehicles be of the same type. For trains of mixed consists, see Appendix F. For rail vehicles, measure/convert a group of locomotives **or** a group of cars separately.

If SEL was measured for a highway-vehicle passby, or a passby of a group of identical rail vehicles:

- Collect the following input information:
 - o SEL_{meas} , the measured SEL for the vehicle passby
 - o N , the consist of the measured group of rail cars or group of locomotives
 - o T , the average throttle setting of the measured diesel-powered locomotive(s)
 - o S_{meas} , the measured passby speed, in miles per hour
 - o D_{meas} , the closest distance between the measurement position and the source, in feet
- Compute the Source Reference Level -- SEL_{ref} -- from the **first** equation in Table E-1.

Example E-1. Computation of SEL_{ref} from SEL Measurement of Fixed-Guideway Source

A passby of two diesel-powered locomotives was measured at

$$SEL_{meas} = 90 \text{ dBA.}$$

For this measurement,

$$\begin{aligned} N &= 2 \\ T &= 6 \\ S_{meas} &= 55 \text{ miles per hour, and} \\ D_{meas} &= 65 \text{ feet.} \end{aligned}$$

The resulting $SEL_{ref} = 86.5 \text{ dBA.}$

End of Example E-1

If SEL was measured for a stationary noise source:

- Collect the following input information:
 - o SEL_{meas} , the measured SEL for the noise source, for whatever source "event" is convenient to measure
 - o E_{meas} , the event duration, in seconds
 - o D_{meas} , the closest distance between the measurement position and the source, in feet
- Compute the Source Reference Level -- SEL_{ref} -- from the **second** equation in Table E-1.

Example E-2. Computation of SEL_{ref} from SEL Measurement of Stationary Source

A signal crossing was measured for a 10-second "event" at

$$SEL_{meas} = 70.$$

For this measurement,

$$E_{meas} = 10 \text{ seconds and}$$

$$D_{meas} = 25 \text{ feet.}$$

The resulting $SEL_{ref} = 89.5 \text{ dBA}$.

End of Example E-2

If L_{max} was measured for a passby of a group of identical rail vehicles:

- Collect the following input information:
 - o L_{max} , measured for the group passby
 - o N, the consist of the measured group of rail cars or group of locomotives
 - o T, the average throttle setting of the measured diesel-powered locomotive(s)
 - o S_{meas} , the measured passby speed, in miles per hour
 - o D_{meas} , the closest distance between the measurement position and the source, in feet
 - o L_{meas} , the total length of the measured group of locomotives or group of rail cars, in feet
- Compute the Source Reference Level -- SEL_{ref} -- from the **third or fourth** equations in Table E-1, depending on whether the sources are locomotives or rail cars.

Example E-3. Computation of SEL_{ref} from L_{max} Measurement of Fixed-Guideway Source

A passby of a 4-car consist of 70-ft long rail cars was measured at

$$L_{max} = 90.$$

For this measurement,

$$\begin{aligned} N &= 4 \\ S_{meas} &= 70 \text{ miles per hour} \\ D_{meas} &= 65 \text{ feet, and} \\ L_{meas} &= 280 \text{ feet.} \end{aligned}$$

Using the fourth equation in Table E-1,

$$\alpha = 1.14$$

and the resulting $SEL_{ref} = 86.7$ dBA.

End of Example E-3

If L_{max} was measured for a highway-vehicle passby:

- Collect the following input information:
 - o L_{max} , measured for the highway-vehicle passby
 - o S_{meas} , the vehicle speed, in miles per hour
 - o D_{meas} , the closest distance between the measurement position and the source, in feet
- Compute the Source Reference Level -- SEL_{ref} -- from the **fifth** equation in Table E-1.

Example E-4. Computation of SEL_{ref} from L_{max} Measurement of Highway Vehicle Source

A bus was measured at

$$L_{max} = 78 \text{ dBA.}$$

For this measurement,

$$\begin{aligned} S_{meas} &= 40 \text{ miles per hour and} \\ D_{meas} &= 80 \text{ feet.} \end{aligned}$$

Using the fifth equation in Table E-1, the resulting $SEL_{ref} = 87.8$ dBA.

End of Example E-4

Table E-1. Conversion to Source Reference Levels at 50 feet for Transit Noise Sources		
Measured Quantity	Noise Source	Equation
SEL	Vehicle passby	$SEL_{ref} = SEL_{meas} + 10 \log \left(\frac{S_{meas}}{50} \right) + 10 \log \left(\frac{D_{meas}}{50} \right) + C_{consist} + C_{emissions}$
	Stationary noise source	$SEL_{ref} = SEL_{meas} - 10 \log \left(\frac{E_{meas}}{3600} \right) + 20 \log \left(\frac{D_{meas}}{50} \right)$
L_{max}	Rail-vehicle passby, locomotives only	$SEL_{ref} = L_{max} + 10 \log \left(\frac{L_{meas}}{50} \right) + 10 \log \left(\frac{D_{meas}}{50} \right) - 10 \log(2 \varphi) + C_{consist} + C_{emissions} + 3.3$
	Rail-vehicle passby, cars only	$SEL_{ref} = L_{max} + 10 \log \left(\frac{L_{meas}}{50} \right) + 10 \log \left(\frac{D_{meas}}{50} \right) - 10 \log[2 \varphi + \sin(2 \varphi)] + C_{consist} + C_{emissions} + 3.3$
	Highway-vehicle passby	$SEL_{ref} = L_{max} + 20 \log \left(\frac{D_{meas}}{50} \right) + C_{emissions} + 3.3$
Vehicle Type		Expression for $C_{consist}$ Expression for $C_{emissions}$
Locomotives		-10 log (N) 0 For T < 6 -2(T-5) For T ≥ 6
Rail Cars		-10 log (N) $-30 \log \left(\frac{S_{meas}}{50} \right)$
Buses		0 $-25 \times \log \left(\frac{S_{meas}}{50} \right)$
Automobiles		0 $-38.1 \times \log \left(\frac{S_{meas}}{50} \right)$
N = consist, (number of locomotives <i>or</i> rail cars in the measured group) T = average throttle setting of measured diesel – electric locomotive(s) D_{meas} = closest distance between measurement position and source, in feet E_{meas} = event duration of measurement, in seconds L_{meas} = total length of measured group of locomotives <i>or</i> rail cars, in feet S_{meas} = speed of measured vehicle(s), in miles per hour $\varphi = \arctan \left(\frac{L_{meas}}{2D_{meas}} \right)$, in radians		

APPENDIX F. COMPUTING MAXIMUM NOISE LEVEL ($L_{\max}$) FOR A SINGLE TRAIN PASSBY

This appendix provides procedures for the computation of $L_{\max}$ for a single train passby, for those readers desiring such procedures. Table F-1 contains the equations to compute $L_{\max}$. The procedure is summarized as follows.

- Collect the following input information:
 - o SEL_{ref} 's from Chapter 6, specific to both the locomotive type and car type of the train
 - o N_{locos} , the number of locomotives in the train
 - o N_{cars} , the number of cars in the train
 - o L_{locos} , the total length of the train's locomotive(s), in feet (or N_{locos} (unit length))
 - o L_{cars} , the total length of the train's set of rail car(s), in feet (or N_{cars} (unit length))
 - o S , the train speed, in miles per hour
 - o D , the closest distance between the receiver of interest and the train, in feet
- Compute $L_{\max,locos}$ from the locomotive(s) using the first equation in Table F-1.
- Compute $L_{\max,cars}$ from the rail car(s) using the second equation in Table F-1.
- Choose the larger of the two $L_{\max}$'s as the $L_{\max}$ for the total train passby.

Table F-1. Conversion to $L_{\max}$ at the Receiver, for a Single Train Passby	
Source	Equation
Locomotives	$L_{\max, \text{lo cos}} = SEL_{\text{lo cos}} + 10 \log\left(\frac{S}{50}\right) - 10 \log\left(\frac{L}{50}\right) + 10 \log(2 \varphi) - 3.3$
Rail Cars	$L_{\max, \text{cars}} = SEL_{\text{cars}} + 10 \log\left(\frac{S}{50}\right) - 10 \log\left(\frac{L}{50}\right) + 10 \log[2 \varphi + \sin(2 \varphi)] - 3.3$
Total Train	$L_{\max, \text{total}} = \max[L_{\max, \text{lo cos}} \text{ or } L_{\max, \text{cars}}]$
D = closest distance between receiver and source, in feet L = total length of measured group of locomotive(s) or rail car(s), in feet S = vehicle speed, in miles per hour $\varphi = \arctan\left(\frac{L}{2D}\right)$, in radians	

Example F-1. Computation of $L_{\max}$ for Train Passby

A commuter train will pass by a receiver of interest and its $L_{\max}$ is desired. For this train, the following conditions apply:

$$\begin{aligned}
 SEL_{\text{ref}} &= 92 \text{ dB for locomotives and} \\
 &= 82 \text{ dB for rail cars} \\
 N_{\text{locos}} &= 1 \\
 N_{\text{cars}} &= 6 \\
 S &= 43 \text{ miles per hour} \\
 D &= 125 \text{ feet.}
 \end{aligned}$$

The locomotive and rail cars each have a unit length of 70 feet. Therefore,

$$\begin{aligned}
 L_{\text{locos}} &= 70 \text{ feet} \\
 L_{\text{cars}} &= 420 \text{ feet}
 \end{aligned}$$

Using the equations in Table F-1,

$$\begin{aligned}
 \varphi_{\text{lo cos}} &= 0.27 \\
 \varphi_{\text{cars}} &= 1.03
 \end{aligned}$$

and the resulting $L_{\max}$'s are as follows:

$$\begin{aligned}
 L_{\max, \text{locos}} &= 84 \text{ dBA} \\
 L_{\max, \text{cars}} &= 74 \text{ dBA} \\
 L_{\max, \text{total}} &= 84 \text{ dBA.}
 \end{aligned}$$

End of Example F-1



Federal Transit Administration
U.S. Department of Transportation
<http://www.fta.dot.gov>

HANDBOOK OF ACOUSTICAL MEASUREMENTS AND NOISE CONTROL

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CHAPTER 50

COMMUNITY NOISE MEASUREMENTS

Dwight E. Bishop
Paul D. Schomer

INTRODUCTION

Communities are exposed to noise from many sources. Most of the noise usually originates from transportation vehicles: automobiles, trucks, motorcycles, trains, aircraft, etc. The noisiest areas in a community are likely to be located near major airports or near major highways, freeways, or expressways. Some neighborhoods are exposed to noise from industrial sources (refineries, factories, etc.) or noise from commercial sources (air-conditioning equipment, etc.). In quieter areas, “people” noises (children’s shouts and cries, door slams, etc.) and “nature” noises (dog barks, cricket chirps, etc.) may be important contributors to community noise.

In general, the term *community noise* refers to outdoor noise in the vicinity of inhabited areas. *Ambient noise* is the all-encompassing noise associated with a given community site, being usually a composite of sounds from many sources, near and far, with no particular sound dominant.

Community noise surveys usually include descriptions of the spatial and temporal variations in noise levels throughout the community. Such descriptions are relevant to the effects of noise on people located indoors or outdoors. Given the wide range of purposes for which measurements are made, community noise measurements vary widely in depth and detail. Because of the concern about the effects of noise on people, many noise surveys have concentrated on outdoor measurements in residential areas, with fewer measurements elsewhere. Indoor noise environments often are inferred from such outdoor measurements, but this procedure may result in sizable errors through neglect of the noise generated by indoor activities or the lack of accurate information about the noise reduction provided by the building structure.

Community noise varies greatly in magnitude and character among locations—from the quiet suburban areas bordering on farmland to downtown city streets exposed to the din of dense traffic. It generally varies with time of day, being relatively quiet at night when activities are at a minimum and noisier in morning and afternoons during peak traffic periods. Even within a small area, the noise environment varies significantly with position in the vicinity of local noise

sources. For example, in a residential area, there can be a sizable difference in the magnitude and the temporal variation of sound levels measured at the curb of a street and in the backyard of a dwelling sheltered by adjacent buildings. In metropolitan areas, there may be considerable difference in the sound levels existing at the ground floor and outside an apartment many stories above the ground.

Much of the planning effort in community noise surveys is concerned with the development of methods for coping with such temporal and spatial variations in sound level. To provide concise descriptions that account for the temporal variations, several specialized noise measures are employed. Less frequently, a description of the variations in frequency spectra (resulting from different noise source characteristics and the differing sound propagation conditions involved) may be used. In addition, long-term temporal and spatial variations in the environment may be important. Temporal changes may range from considerations of day-to-day variability to seasonal and longer-term changes.

The purpose of a community noise survey heavily influences the type and number of measurements to be made. Typical purposes include the following:

1. To determine the suitability of land for differing uses and activities (i.e., involving the comparison of the existing or future noise environment with land-use criteria). For example, several federal agencies and states specify criteria in terms of day-night average sound level L_{dn} and equivalent-continuous (A-weighted) sound level L_{eq} .^{1,2} Table 50.1 shows acceptable land use and minimum building noise insulation required for various values of the outdoor L_{dn} or L_{eq} .¹ As another example, if a proposed apartment, hotel, or motel is to be located where the value of L_{dn} (averaged over 1 year) exceeds 60 dB, the state of California requires a special noise analysis to show that building will provide noise insulation such that noise level in any habitable room will not exceed an L_{dn} of 45 dB.³
2. To compare sound levels with values specified in noise regulations or noise ordinances.
3. To obtain environmental descriptions for assessing current or future noise impacts as part of environmental impact statements (see Chap. 54).
4. To determine the need and/or extent of noise control of existing or future noise sources.
5. To identify outdoor noise sources and determine the extent of their influence.
6. To obtain a description of community noise for correlation with the community's response to noise (see Chap. 23).
7. To estimate the noise exposure of individuals (see Chap. 12).

METHODS FOR DESCRIBING COMMUNITY NOISE

Community noise surveys usually result in the accumulation of large amounts of data that are bulky to handle and difficult to assimilate or compare. To obtain meaningful and concise descriptions of community noise, single-number measures are often used that are simplified descriptors, often derived from statistical analysis or assumptions. However, such simple measures are necessarily incomplete representations of actual conditions and, on occasion, can be misleading. A number of special measures of the noise environment have been developed, each

TABLE 50.1 Land-Use Compatibility* with Yearly Day-Night Average Sound Levels

Land use	Yearly day-night average sound level (L_{dn}), dB					
	Below 65	65-70	70-75	75-80	80-85	Over 85
Residential:						
Residential, other than mobile homes and transient lodgings	Y	N(1)	N(1)	N	N	N
Mobile home parks	Y	N	N	N	N	N
Transient lodgings	Y	N(1)	N(1)	N(1)	N	N
Public use:						
Schools	Y	N(1)	N(1)	N	N	N
Hospital and nursing homes	Y	25	30	N	N	N
Churches, auditoriums, and concert halls	Y	25	30	N	N	N
Governmental services	Y	Y	25	30	N	N
Transportation	Y	Y	Y(2)	Y(3)	Y(4)	Y(4)
Parking	Y	Y	Y(2)	Y(3)	Y(4)	N
Commercial use:						
Offices, business and professional	Y	Y	25	30	N	N
Wholesale and retail—building materials, hardware, and farm equipment	Y	Y	Y(2)	Y(3)	Y(4)	N
Retail trade—general	Y	Y	25	30	N	N
Utilities	Y	Y	Y(2)	Y(3)	Y(4)	N
Communication	Y	Y	25	30	N	N
Manufacturing and production:						
Manufacturing, general	Y	Y	Y(2)	Y(3)	Y(4)	N
Photographic and optical	Y	Y	25	30	N	N
Agriculture (except livestock) and forestry	Y	Y(6)	Y(7)	Y(8)	Y(8)	Y(8)
Livestock farming and breeding	Y	Y(6)	Y(7)	N	N	N
Mining and fishing, resource production and extraction	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
Recreational:						
Outdoor sports arenas and spectator sports	Y	Y(5)	Y(5)	N	N	N
Outdoor music shells, amphitheaters	Y	N	N	N	N	N
Nature exhibits and zoos	Y	Y	N	N	N	N
Amusements, parks, resorts and camps	Y	Y	Y	N	N	N
Golf courses, riding stables, and water recreation	Y	Y	25	30	N	N

Numbers in parentheses refer to notes.

*The designations contained in this table do not constitute a federal determination that any use of land covered by a program is acceptable or unacceptable under federal, state, or local law. The responsibility for determining the acceptable and permissible land uses and the relationship between specific noise contours rests with the local authorities. FAA determinations under Part 150 are not intended to substitute federally determined land uses for those determined to be appropriate by local authorities in response to locally determined needs and values in achieving noise-compatible land uses.

Key: Y(yes) Land use and related structures compatible without restrictions. N(no) Land use and related structures are not compatible and should be prohibited. NLR Noise level reduction (outdoor to indoor) to be achieved through incorporation of noise attenuation into the design and construction of the structure. 25, 30, or 35 Land use and related structures generally compatible; measures to achieve an NLR of 25, 30, or 35 dB must be incorporated into the design and construction of the structure.

Notes: (1) Where the community determines that residential or school uses must be allowed, measures to achieve an outdoor to indoor noise level reduction (NLR) of at least 25 dB and 30 dB should be incorporated into building codes and be considered in individual approvals. Normal residential construction can be expected to provide an NLR of 20 dB; thus, the reduction requirements are often stated as 5, 10, or 15 dB over standard construction and normally assume mechanical ventilation and closed windows year-round. However, the use of NLR criteria will not eliminate outdoor noise problems. (2) Measures to achieve NLR 25 dB must be incorporated into the design and construction of portions of these buildings where the public is received, office areas, noise-sensitive areas, or where the normal noise level is low. (3) Measures to achieve NLR of 30 dB must be incorporated into the design and construction of portions of these buildings where the public is received, office areas, noise-sensitive areas, or where the normal noise level is low. (4) Measures to achieve NLR 35 dB must be incorporated into the design and construction of portions of these buildings where the public is received, office areas, noise-sensitive areas, or where the normal level is low. (5) Land use compatible provided special sound reinforcement systems are installed. (6) Residential buildings require an NLR of 25. (7) Residential buildings require an NLR of 30. (8) Residential buildings not permitted.

Source: Ref. 1.

emphasizing certain statistical characteristics of variations with time; each attempts to achieve a more meaningful measure of the noise as it affects the response of people exposed to it.

Variation in Spectral Content

There can be very wide variations in the spectral content of community noise, given the wide variety of noise sources within it. However, where community noise results largely from surface traffic, the noise spectra generally follow the trends shown in Figs. 50.1 and 50.2. Figure 50.1 illustrates the average octave-band sound pressure levels of ambient noise measured in a large number of res-

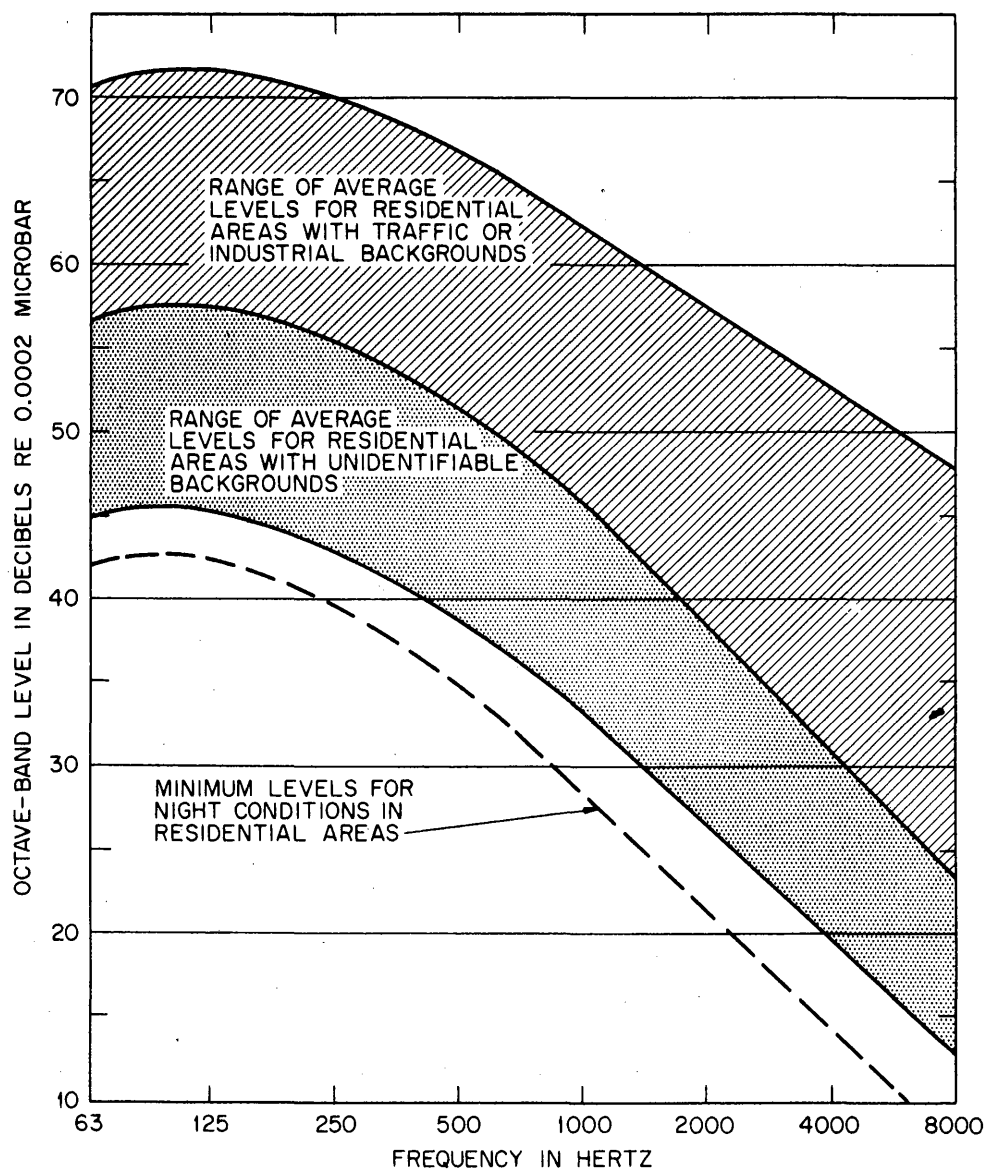


FIG. 50.1 Average octave-band spectra of ambient noise measured in residential areas. (After Bonvallet.⁴)

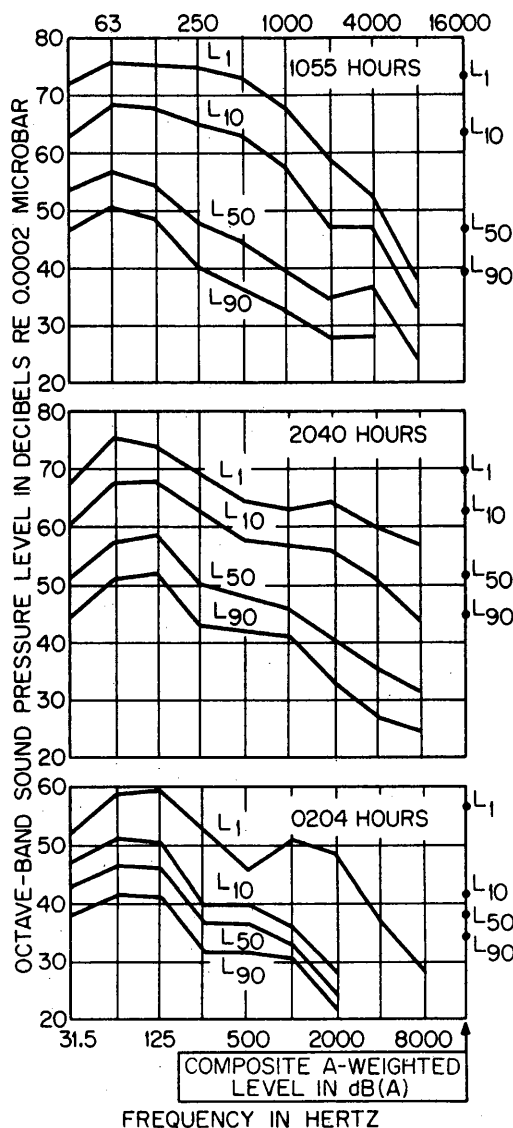


FIG. 50.2 Octave-band spectra of ambient noise in a residential area in Portland, Oregon.

idential areas in Chicago some years ago.⁴ These measurements were made in the absence of noise from nearby sources, such as children at play or dogs barking.

Figure 50.2 shows the result of statistical analysis of three 10-minute samples of ambient noise in a residential area in Portland, Oregon,⁵ in which the noise from all events was included. A-weighted sound levels are shown, as well as the octave-band sound pressure levels. The subscripts refer to the percentage of time the levels are exceeded. For example, the 10-percentile-exceeded sound level is L_{10} . The 50-percentile-exceeded sound level L_{50} is sometimes described as the *median sound level*. The range between the L_1 and the L_{90} curves provides a good indication of the variability in the spectral content during the period of measurement.

Most community measurements show octave-band spectra with slopes which are similar to those of Fig. 50.1 and 50.2, with sound levels nearly equal or irregular in the octave bands centered at frequencies of 31.5, 63, and 125 Hz. At higher frequencies, the octave-band sound pressure levels decrease with frequency at rates of 3 to 6 dB per octave.

Many local or intermittent noise sources can produce spectra that are distinctly different from the trends shown in Figs. 50.1 and 50.2. For example, Figs. 50.3 and 50.4 illustrate some people and animal noises which produce relatively high sound levels at frequencies above 1000 Hz.⁶

For most purposes other than detailed noise control studies, and for situations involving sources which produce high noise levels at extremely low frequencies, the A-weighted sound level serves as an adequate descriptor. Furthermore, it is the descriptor most used in community noise regulations. Hence, the rest of this chapter relies primarily on descriptions of community noise based on A-weighted sound level measurements.

For detailed noise control studies, the A-weighted sound level measurements should be supplemented or replaced by octave-band or one-third-octave-band spectral analysis. It is rarely necessary to employ finer spectral analysis. In general, temporal and spatial variations in the outdoor noise environment are so large that placing large emphasis on minor spectral variations should be avoided.

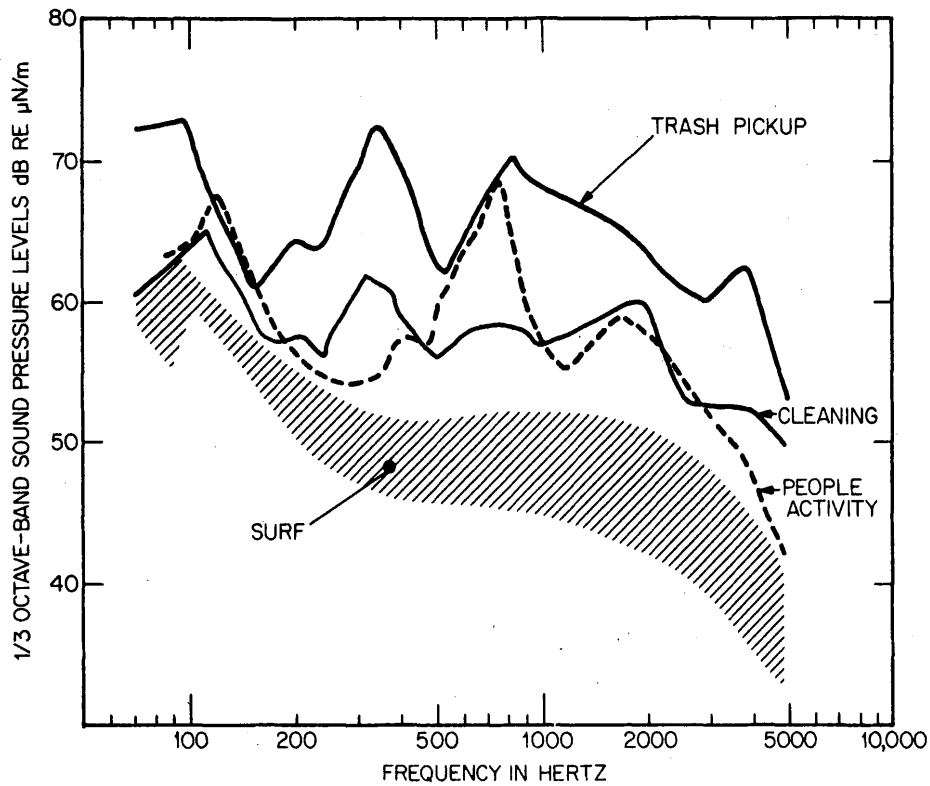


FIG. 50.3 One-third-octave-band spectra of noise measured at a beach.

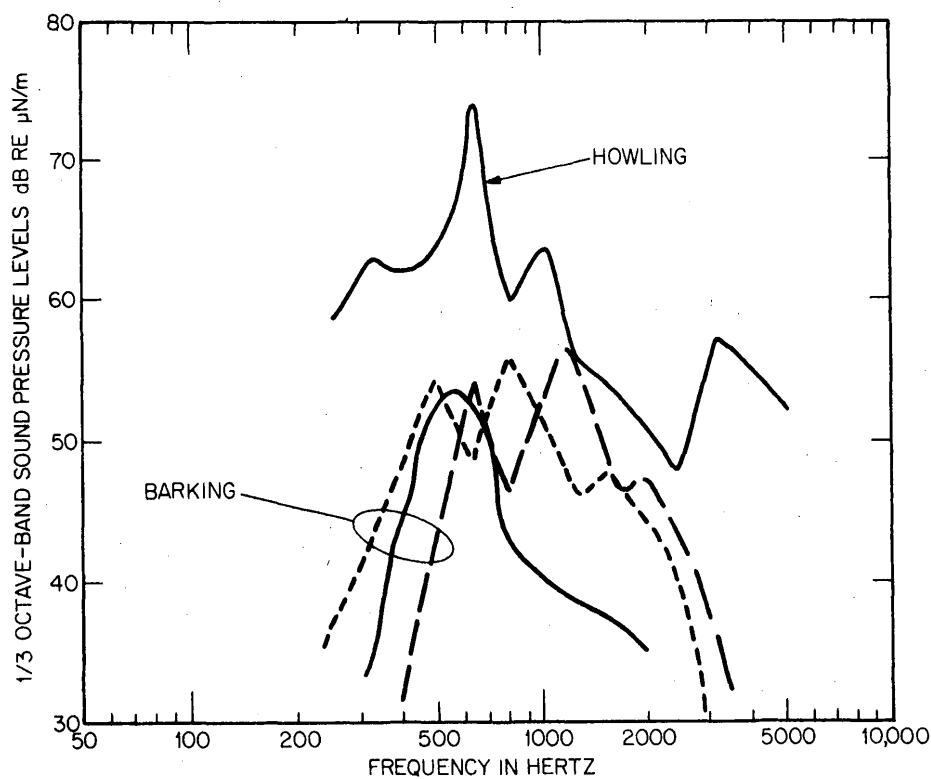


FIG. 50.4 One-third-octave-band spectra of noise of a dog barking and howling.

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Temporal Variations in Sound Levels

The temporal pattern of sound levels at a given position may be observed on a continuous graphic level record such as the two 8-minute samples shown in Fig. 50.5. These samples illustrate some of the important features found in most community noise surveys:

- A-weighted sound levels vary significantly with time (in this case, over a range of 33 dB).
- Community noise appears to be characterized by a fairly steady *lower sound level* on which is superimposed the increased sound levels associated with discrete single events. The all-encompassing ambient noise depicted in Fig. 50.5 includes contributions from distant unidentifiable sources *and* local sources which produce discrete noise events. The distinct noise events often are classified as *intrusive noise*. The fairly steady lower sound level on which is superimposed the discrete single events is sometimes called the residual sound level, as noted in Fig. 50.5.
- There is a marked difference in the sound-level-vs.-time patterns for different discrete noise events. The sound levels resulting from aircraft rise above the ambient noise level for a duration of approximately 80 seconds, whereas the sound levels from the cars passing result in patterns of much shorter duration.

Descriptors that Eliminate Temporal Details

Exceedance Levels. Continuous recordings of noise provide much information for understanding the nature of the outdoor environment at a given location.

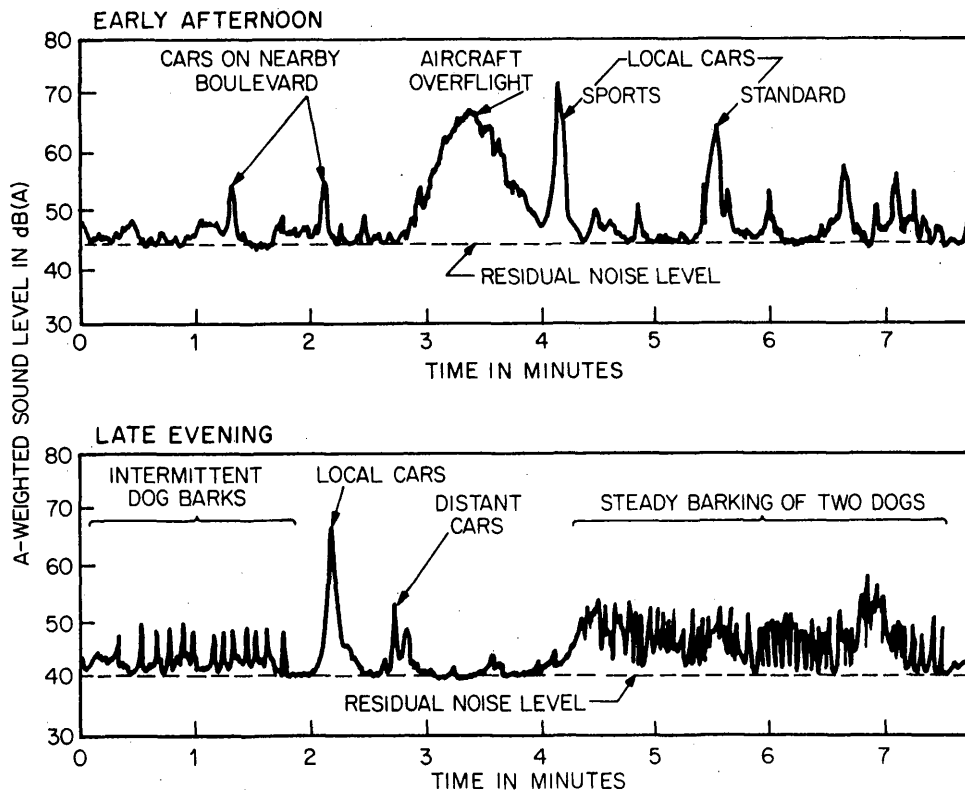


FIG. 50.5 Two samples showing A-weighted sound levels of outdoor noise vs. time in a suburban neighborhood with the microphone located 6.1 m (20 ft) from the street curb.

However, for a convenient comparison with the noise at other locations, it is necessary to simplify descriptions by eliminating much of the temporal details. One method of doing this is to measure the percentage of the total sample time that the noise falls between two sound levels, L_i and $L_i + L_d$ (where d is "window" size which influences the value of L_d). From this information a sound level histogram can be constructed, in addition to the cumulative distribution of sound levels. From the cumulative distribution, the sound levels exceeded for various percentages of time can be determined. From these data, the equivalent-continuous (A-weighted) sound level L_{eq} as well as other special descriptors of sound level can be calculated. Figures 50.6, 50.7, and 50.8 illustrate various ways of presenting the results of such statistical data. Figure 50.6 shows the 1-, 10-, 50-, and 90-percentile-exceeded sound levels calculated from hourly samples, over a 24-hour day, measured inside and outside a downtown office building in Los Angeles.⁷ Also shown is the hourly equivalent-continuous (A-weighted) sound level L_{eq} (also called *hourly average level*) calculated from each hourly sample. Descriptions of the noise in terms of the values of L_1 , L_{10} , L_{50} , L_{90} , and L_{eq} are more than sufficient for most purposes.

The value of the equivalent-continuous sound level L_{eq} is the most useful single number for describing the noise environment over a given short period of time. The 90-percentile-exceeded sound level L_{90} often is taken as a measure of the residual noise level, little influenced by nearby discrete events. The L_1 , and, to a lesser extent, the L_{10} sound levels are heavily influenced by the noisier discrete events that may occur.

Figures 50.7 and 50.8 show the distributions in sound level for day and night periods computed from the hourly data of Fig. 50.6. In Fig. 50.7 the noise data are presented as a histogram. The distributions are skewed with a larger tail at higher levels. Figure 50.8 shows the same data plotted as cumulative distributions on normal probability paper. If the measured distributions are normal or gaussian, the distributions form straight lines. In contrast, the curves of Fig. 50.8 show a distinct curvature, a consequence of the shapes of the histograms shown in Fig. 50.7.

Daily (24-Hour) Sound Level Descriptors. For more concise descriptions of the 24-hour noise environment, the equivalent-continuous sound levels for day and night periods (or day, evening, and night periods) can be computed. For a

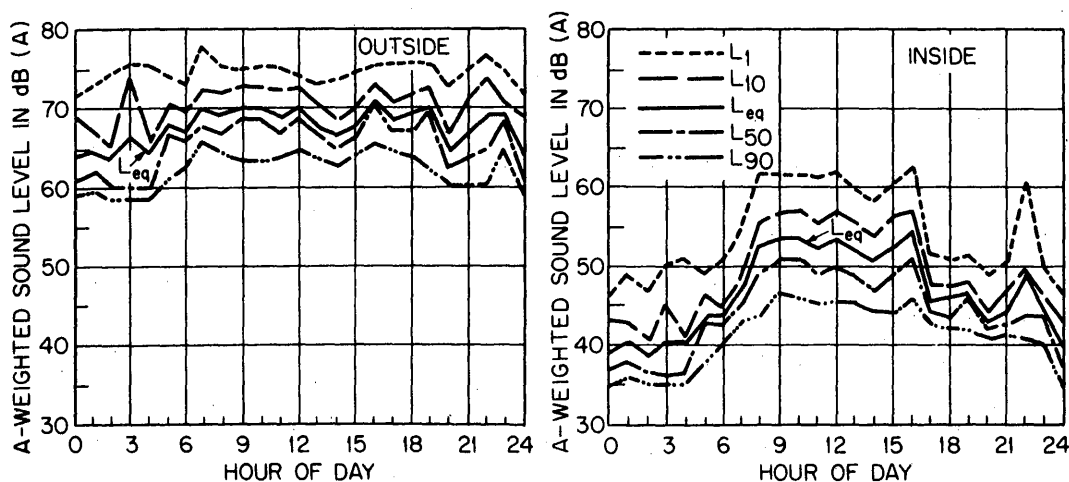


FIG. 50.6 Sound levels vs. time for noise measured outside and inside an urban downtown office building, Los Angeles.

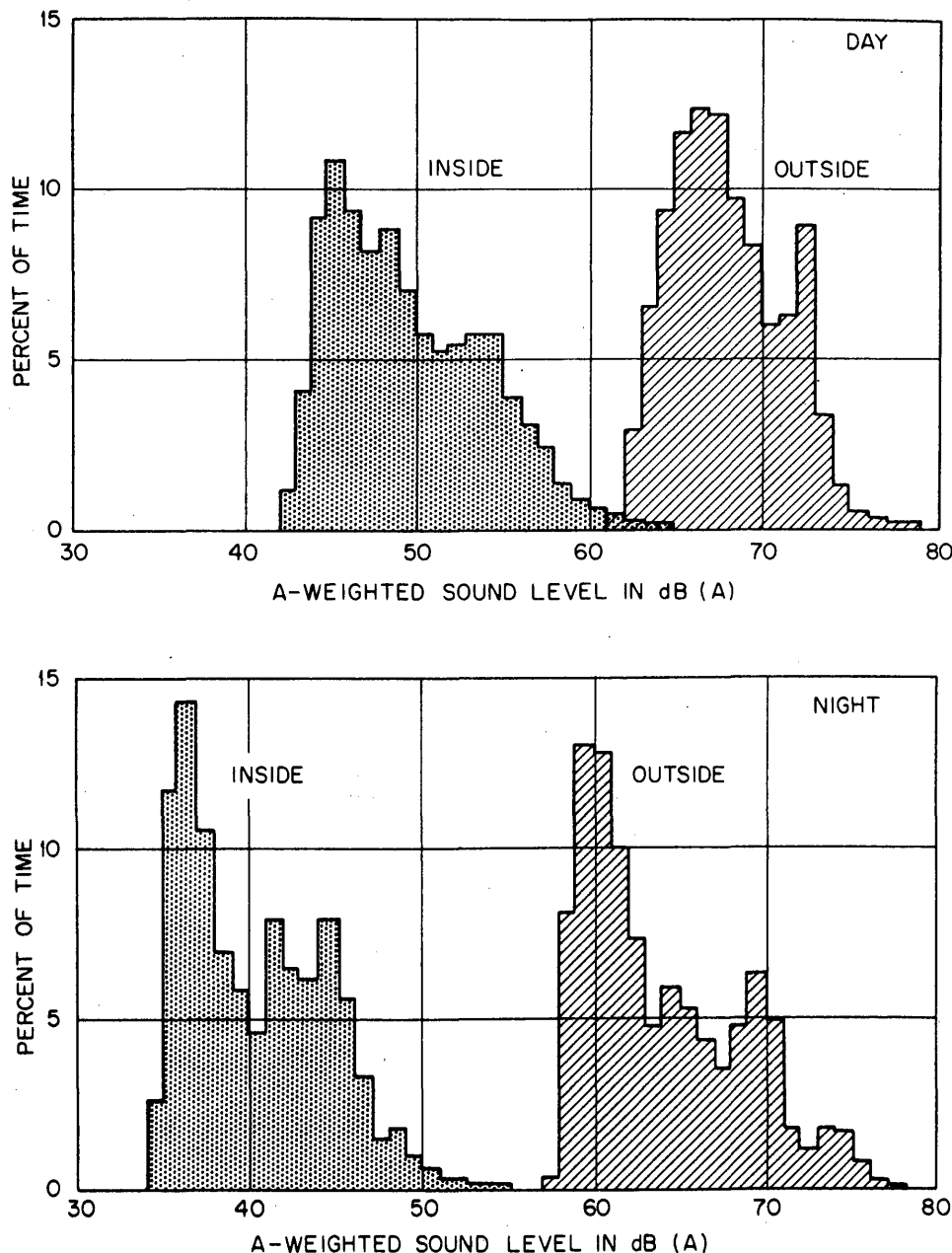


FIG. 50.7 A histogram showing the distribution of A-weighted sound levels measured outside and inside an urban downtown building, Los Angeles.

single number description, the *day-night average sound level* L_{dn} (defined in Chap. 11) is recommended. [A measure similar to the day-night average level, the *community noise equivalent level* (CNEL)—defined in Chap. 11, is used in the state of California.] The day-night average sound level can readily be calculated either from the hourly equivalent-continuous sound levels or from the equivalent-continuous sound levels for day (7:00 a.m. to 10:00 p.m.) and night (10:00 p.m. to 7:00 a.m.) periods.

Noise Pollution Level (NPL). A noise measure sometimes used to describe community noise is the noise pollution level,⁸ which employs the equivalent-continuous (A-weighted) sound level L_{eq} and the magnitude of the time fluctua-

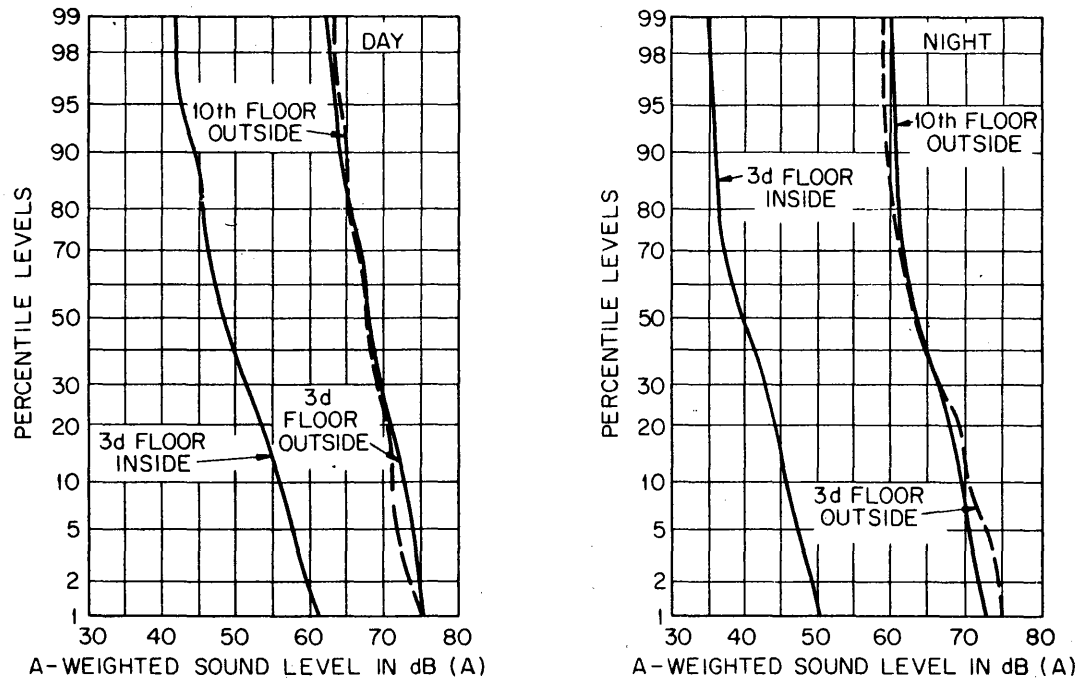


FIG. 50.8 Cumulative distributions of A-weighted sound levels, for daytime and nighttime periods, for noise measured outside and inside an urban downtown office building, Los Angeles.

tions in levels. It attempts to account for the increased annoyance due to temporal fluctuations in the noise. Noise pollution level is defined as

$$L_{NP} = L_{eq} + 2.56\sigma \text{ dB} \quad (50.1)$$

where L_{NP} is the letter symbol for noise pollution level and σ is the standard deviation of the instantaneous sound levels sampled during the period of measurement.

Traffic Noise Index (TNI). The traffic noise index sometimes is used to describe community noise. The traffic noise index takes into account the amount of variability in observed sound levels in an attempt to improve the correlation between traffic noise measurements and subjective response to noise. The traffic noise index is defined as

$$TNI = 4(L_{10} - L_{90}) + L_{90} - 30 \text{ dB} \quad (50.2)$$

where L_{10} and L_{90} are described in the section "Temporal Variations in sound levels," above. The first term represents the range between the 10-percentile-exceeded sound levels and the 90-percentile-exceeded sound level ($L_{10} - L_{90}$), and the second term represents the ambient noise level. The traffic noise index and the noise pollution level both have apparent limitations or show inconsistencies when applied to widely different kinds of community noise.⁹

Variations with Time of Day. Community noise levels show variations with time of day which correlate with the time pattern of human activities and usage of the dominant noise sources. For areas exposed primarily to motor vehicle traffic, the noise environment shows patterns distinctly related to the flow of motor vehicle traffic, with modifications produced by other sources. For example, Fig. 50.6 shows a moderate variation of sound levels with hour of day in a busy downtown area. A more typical hourly pattern for sites not located near airports or freeways,¹⁰ Fig. 50.9, shows the difference between the hourly values of the

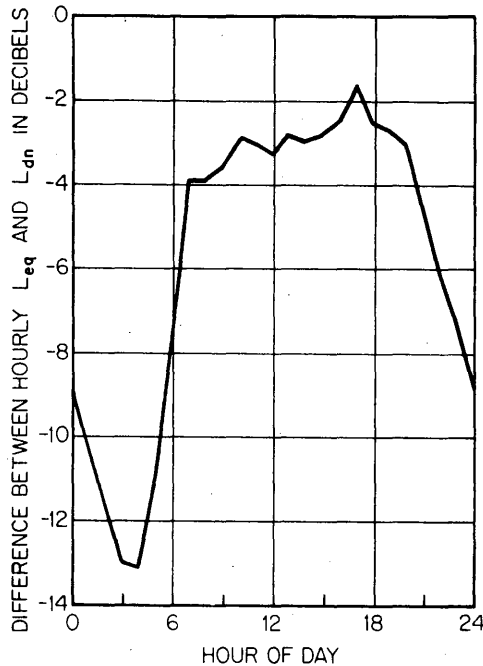


FIG. 50.9 Difference between hourly L_{eq} and L_{dn} vs. time of day.

equivalent-continuous sound level L_{eq} values and the day-night average sound level L_{dn} plotted for each hour of the day. These data represent a composite (median values) of patterns measured at 100 sites encompassing a wide range of population densities. Although the standard deviation of the sound levels within each hour ranged from 2.5 to 4.0 dB, showing considerable variation among the sites, there was a well-defined pattern, with a difference of about 11 dB between the quietest hour (3:00 to 4:00 a.m.) and the noisiest hour (4:00 to 5:00 p.m.).

There are generally differences in patterns between suburban (low population density) and urban (high population density) areas. The suburban areas show maximum sound levels in evening hours, while the high-population-density locations show less variation between the day and night hours, and maximum sound levels occur during the morning rush hours rather than the evening hours.

For the 100 samples of Fig. 50.9, the median difference between the equivalent-continuous sound level L_{eq} values for day and night periods is approximately 6 dB; the difference increases to 8 to 10 dB for low values of the day-night average sound level in suburban areas and decreases to 4 to 5 dB for higher values of the day-night average sound level observed in the higher-density urban areas.

Figure 50.10 illustrates typical changes in levels for different traffic flows categorized as follows:

- Light traffic—typically eight vehicles or fewer per minute during peak daytime flow
- Heavy traffic—more than eight vehicles per minute during traffic flow
- Limited-access highways or freeways

Figure 50.10 is based on measurements at a distance of 10.7 m (35 ft) from the nearest roadway at 41 different locations in urban and suburban areas in 5 cities.¹¹ It illustrates noise level increases with traffic volume and the narrowing difference between daytime and nighttime levels with typical freeway traffic compared with light traffic.

Statistical Distribution Patterns. The statistical distribution of sound levels at a site often shows well-defined patterns which can be related to the major noise sources. For sites exposed to moderate and high volumes of motor vehicle traffic noise, and where there are no other “strong” sources, the distributions of sound levels approximate the shape of a gaussian distribution.

Where there are noise sources which produce high sound levels for short periods of time, the resultant distribution patterns show large departures from gaussian distributions. For example, Figs. 50.11 and 50.12 show the histograms

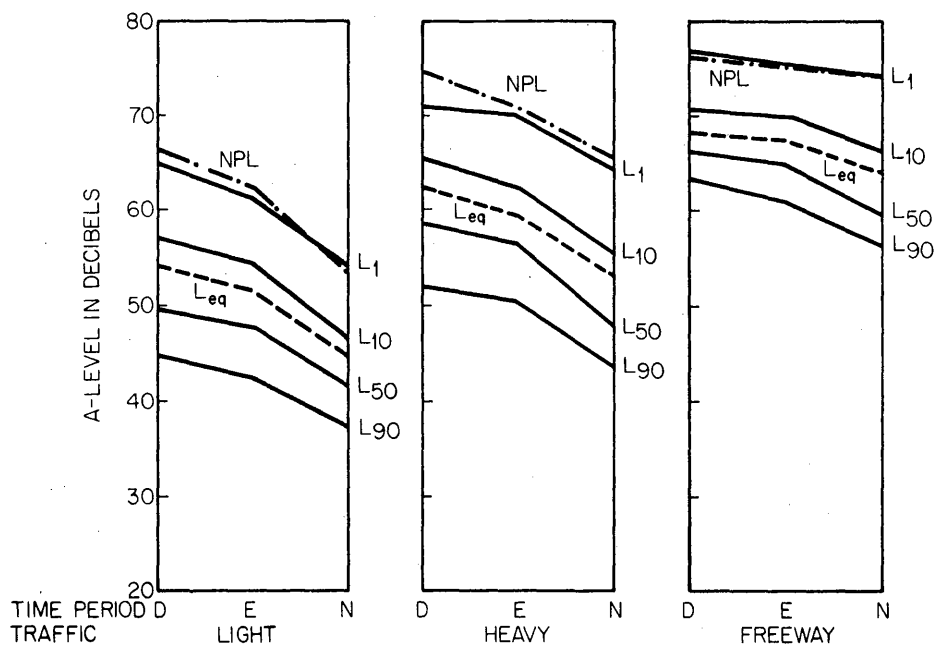


FIG. 50.10 Median A-weighted sound levels for different traffic exposures.

and cumulative distribution patterns measured inside and outside a dwelling located under the approach path to a major airport.¹¹

Noise data measured in residential areas exposed primarily to motor vehicle traffic often show patterns with distinct curvature in the cumulative distribution curves. Many patterns show a distinct break in the curves, indicating that the

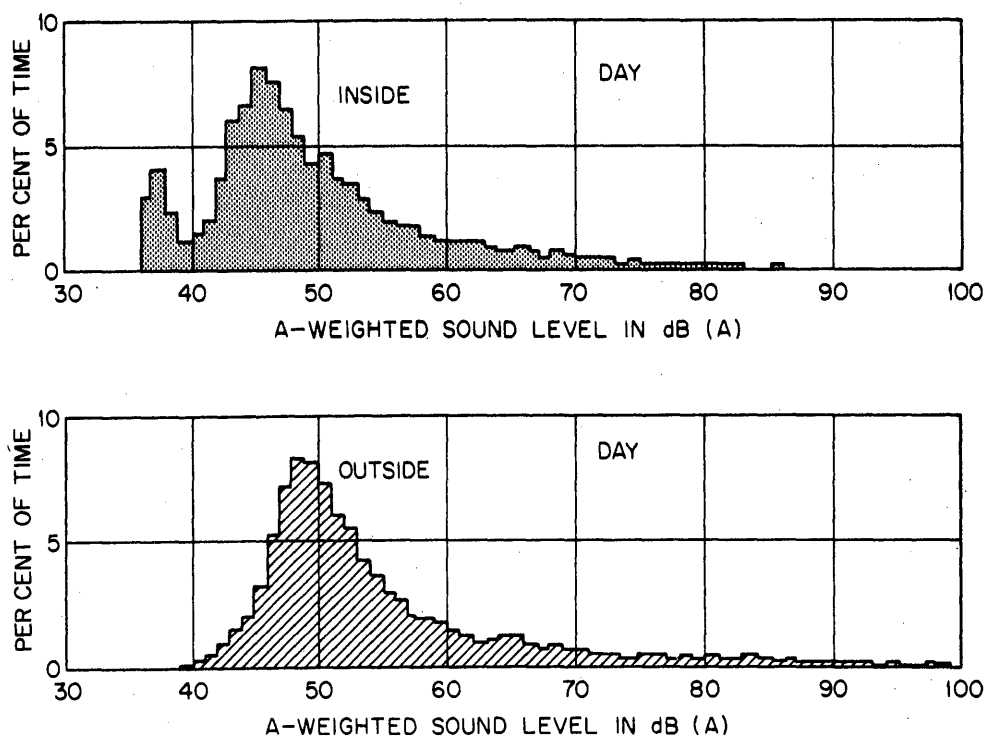


FIG. 50.11 A-weighted sound level distributions outside and inside a residence under the landing path at Los Angeles International Airport.

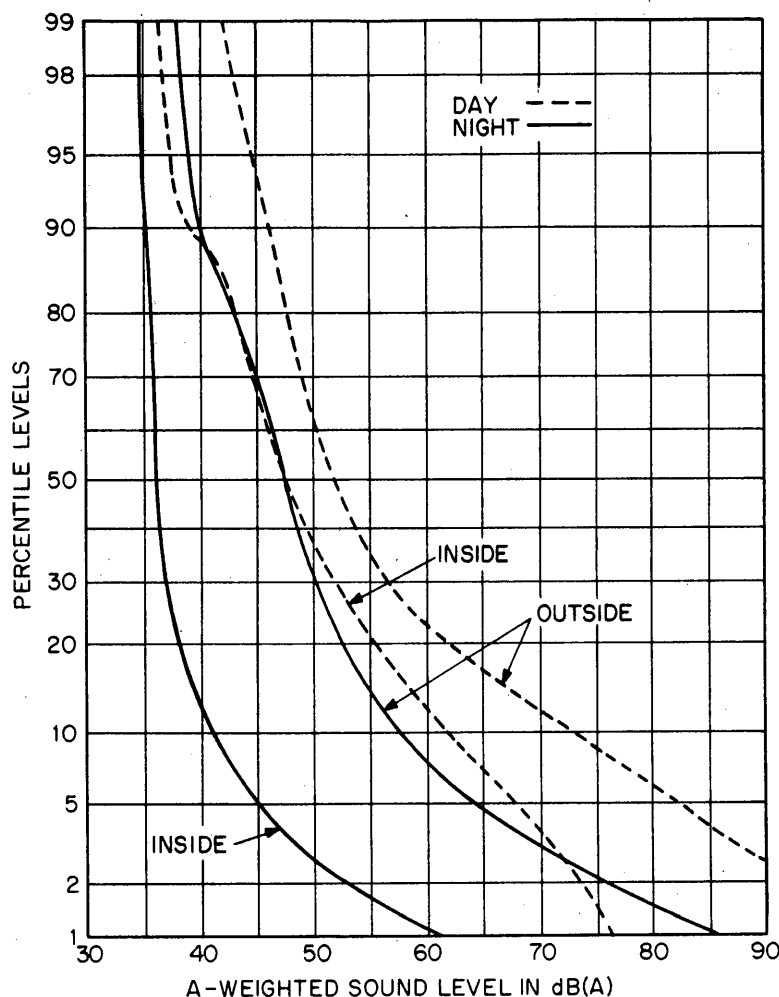


FIG. 50.12 Cumulative distribution of A-weighted sound levels of day-time and nighttime periods outside and inside a residence under the landing path at Los Angeles International Airport.

noise environment is composed of two distinct classes of noise, each of which has a near-gaussian distribution.

Long-Term (Many Year) Changes in Community Noise. Comparisons of noise surveys undertaken since 1937 show that where the land use has not changed, there is no strong trend of increases in the average suburban, urban residential, or downtown metropolitan area 50-percentile-exceeded sound levels L_{50} over the years.⁶ However, where there have been great increases in the numbers of sources which produce high sound levels, there have been large increases in the areas exposed to relatively high sound levels. Thus, since 1955, there have been manifold increases in the areas of land near airports and urban freeways that are exposed to day-night average sound levels of 65 dB or greater.⁶

Day-to-Day Variability in Community Noise. The community day-night average sound level L_{dn} values for different types of communities show standard deviations in the range of 2 to 5 dB; this variation limits the extent of agreement in repeated measurements. The variability in usage or activity of the major noise-producing sources increases this range. For example, near major roadways, there

are usually significant differences in patterns of noise exposure between weekdays and weekends when large differences exist between traffic flows for days during the week and days during the weekend.

At many airports, different runways are used, depending on wind conditions. Hence there can be large changes in noise exposure in a given community area, depending on weather conditions. For those airports which handle large volumes of airline traffic, the total number of operations usually does not vary significantly on a day-to-day basis. Hence the noise exposure (barring shift in runway usage) does not show large day-to-day variations. In contrast, for many military airports, there can be a sharp decrease in operations during weekends and holidays; hence the community noise levels are markedly lower during such weekend and holiday periods. The converse may happen when the military is a reserve or guard unit, or in the vicinity of many general aviation (nonairline) airports, since peak activity may well occur during weekends rather than weekdays.

Seasonal Variability in Community Noise. The variability in the week-to-week noise environment in different types of communities arises mainly from seasonal shifts in weather conditions and/or seasonal shifts in noise source operations or conditions. At many locations, wind direction, speed, and the frequency of temperature inversions vary with the season. These can effect changes in the day-night average sound level L_{dn} of 10 dB or more. Seasonal changes can also affect the source. Factory windows may be open in the summer but closed in the winter, or, as noted above, runway usage at an airport mirrors changes in prevailing winds. These sources of variation combine with the day-to-day variation to increase the standard deviation of the day-night average sound level L_{dn} values over the 2 to 5 dB range given above.

Variations at Sites Not Near Highways or Freeways. Some information on the repeatability of measurements in community areas not exposed to freeway or aircraft noise is provided by two sets of 24-hour measurements made at 24 residential sites, approximately 1 year apart.¹² The sites spanned a wide range of population densities, approximately 3100 to 142,000 people per square kilometer (1200 to 55,000 people per square mile). The average difference in values of L_{dn} and in day and night L_{10} , L_{50} , and L_{eq} ranged from -0.2 to 1.1 dB (with L_{dn} showing a 0.1-dB average change). However, the standard deviations of the differences ranged from 2.6 to 5.2 dB (3.2 dB for L_{dn}), indicating that relatively large changes were observed at some individual sites.

Variations at Sites Near Airports. The standard deviations of some measurements of the community noise equivalent level (CNEL), taken at positions near airports, are shown in Fig. 50.13. Data are shown for 16 locations at four airports (three civil and one military) handling mostly jet aircraft.¹³ The measurements covered periods ranging from 13 to 193 days per position. In Fig. 50.13 the standard deviations in the daily sound levels are plotted against distance from the aircraft flight path. The solid line is a regression line fitted to all of the data; the dashed line is fitted to *only* the takeoff data. These data indicate a moderate increase in standard deviation with distance. For the dashed line, the slope approximates a 0.5-dB increase in the standard deviation per doubling of distance from the aircraft; the standard deviation is about 2 dB at 304.8 m (1000 ft), increasing to about 3 dB at 1219 m (4000 ft) from the aircraft.

Figure 50.14 shows daily L_{dn} levels at two airport sites where seasonal changes in weather is a factor. Here the standard deviation in L_{dn} is on the order of 3 dB.

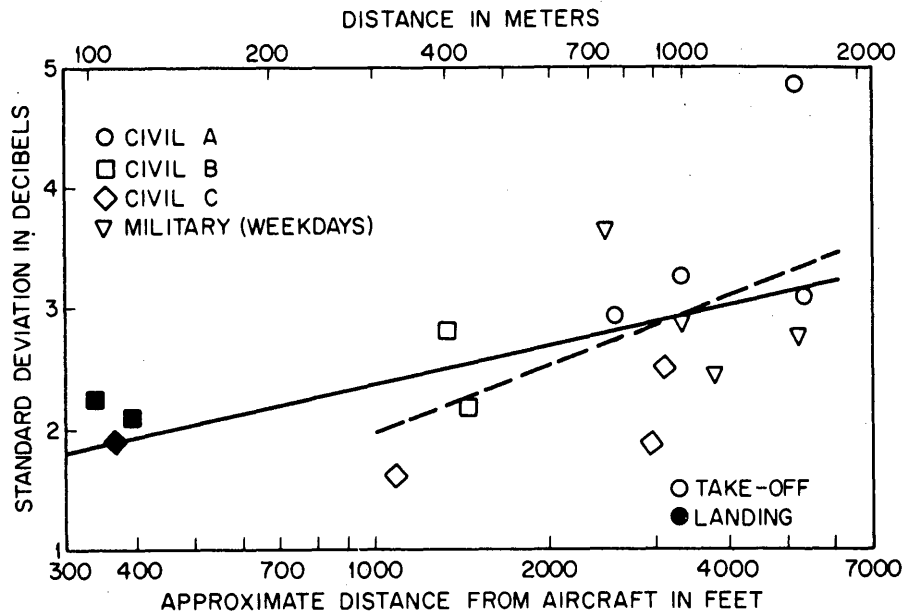


FIG. 50.13 Variability in daily community noise equivalent level (CNEL) measured at various distance from aircraft at four airports.

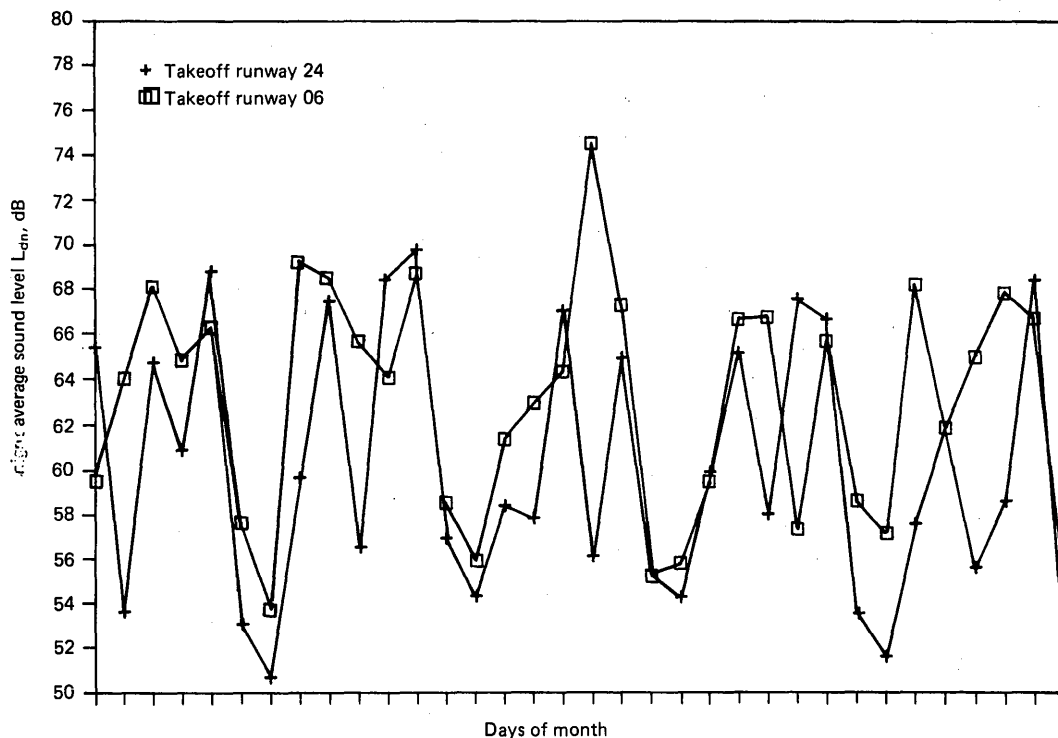


FIG. 50.14 Sample of daily day-night average sound levels measured at two positions near an airport where frequent wind changes occur.

With the sizable variability indicated by the above data, and where seasonal variations are small, measurements must be made over a number of days to obtain accurate results. Figure 9.7 provides a rough guide for determining the minimum number of measurements needed to determine an average within different

intervals with 90 percent confidence. For example, for a standard deviation of about 2 dB in daily levels, 5 days of measurements must be made to determine levels to within ± 2 dB. With a 3-dB standard deviation, a ± 2 -dB confidence interval requires 8 days of measurements.

Where seasonal changes are not small, measurements of L_{dn} must be sampled throughout a year. One strategy shown to yield a +2- to -3-dB, 95 percent confidence interval is to sample for four 1-week periods, with 1 week chosen randomly from each season.

Spatial Variations

To describe spatial variations in sound levels, statistical descriptions similar to those described above for temporal variations may be applied to a given measure of sound level (L_{50} , L_{eq} , or L_{dn} values, for example) taken at different locations. Where it is important to show differences in sound level between locations, a contour presentation is used. Contours of equal sound levels are drawn on a map, similar to those of equal elevation on a topographical map. Computer programs are available for drawing such contours for highway traffic noise, aircraft noise, and some types of industrial noise. (See Chaps. 47 and 48.)

Variations in Noise Levels with Location. To illustrate the wide range of noise environments that may be encountered, Figs 50.15 and 50.16 show the results of outdoor noise measurements made at 18 sites which varied from wilderness to downtown metropolitan areas.⁶ Figure 50.15 shows the range of outdoor daytime A-weighted sound levels (i.e., the daytime average sound levels). Figure 50.16 presents the corresponding night average sound levels. The locations are listed from top to bottom in descending order of their daytime values of L_{90} . The day-

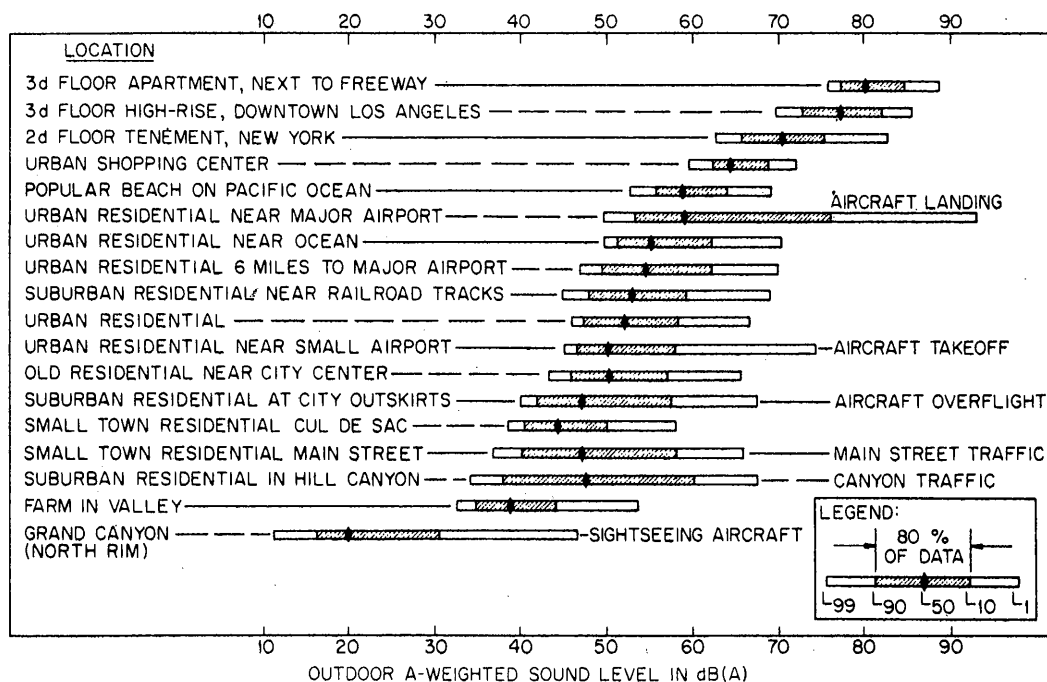


FIG. 50.15 A-weighted sound levels measured during the daytime at 18 outdoor locations, as indicated. Data are the arithmetic averages of the 12 hourly values in the daytime period from 7:00 a.m. to 7:00 p.m. (i.e., these are the daytime average sound levels).

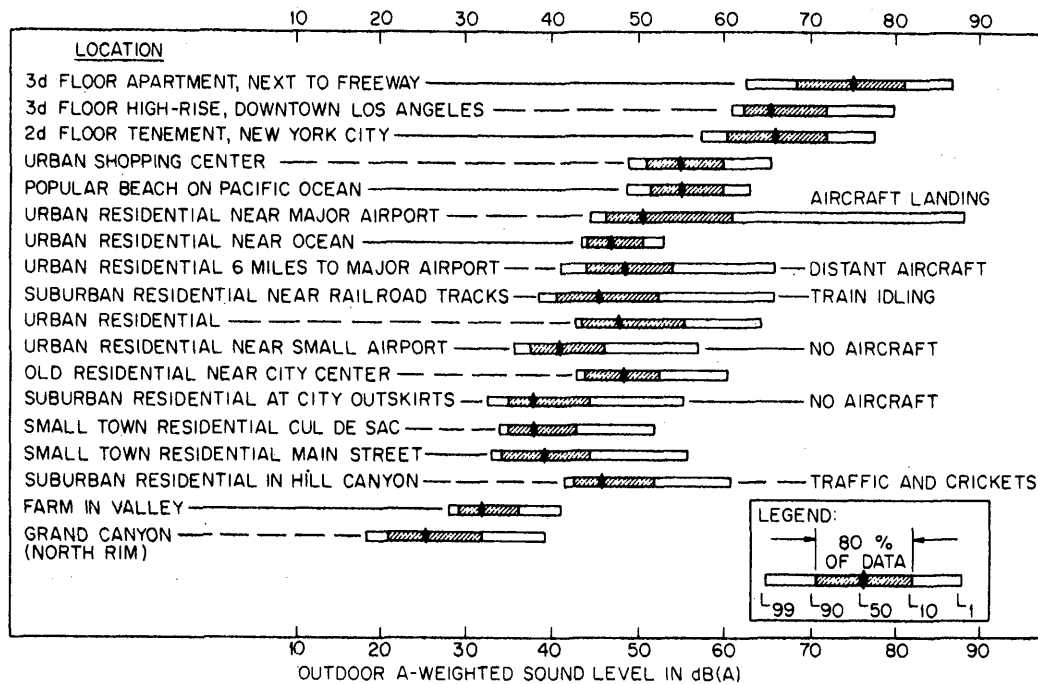


FIG. 50.16 A-weighted sound levels measured during the night at 18 outdoor locations, as indicated. Data are arithmetic averages of the 9 hourly values in the night period from 10:00 p.m. to 7:00 a.m.

time 50-percentile-exceeded sound level L_{50} values range from 20 to 80 dB among the 18 sites.

Variation in Noise Levels with Height. In high-population-density metropolitan areas, the noise environment must be considered as a function of height as well as horizontally. Of particular interest is the variation of sound level outside multi-story apartment buildings. One study¹⁴ indicates that the ambient noise level (excluding strong local sources) above a continuous distribution of random noise sources in the horizontal plane decreases slowly with height; the rate of decrease with height lessens as the density of noise sources increases. For isolated multi-story buildings, the noise contributions from strong local sources decrease more or less as in free-field conditions. However, where there are many multistory buildings, even the noise from local sources decreases more slowly (or even increases) owing to the reflections from adjacent buildings. Given this difference in the decrease of noise from distant sources compared with the local sources, the 90-percentile-exceeded sound level values decrease slowly with height, while the lower-percentile-exceeded sound levels (L_1 or L_{10}), which are generally dictated by the stronger local sources, drop off more rapidly. This results in smaller fluctuations in noise levels with height. Such behavior is illustrated by the data shown in Fig. 50.17, which are based on measurements outside four different floors of a 39-story apartment building in New York City.¹⁵ For A-weighted sound level data taken on various floors, the range in 50-percentile-exceeded sound level L_{50} is approximately 5 dB; the range in the 1-percentile-exceeded sound level L_1 is approximately 20 dB. A less pronounced change in levels with height is shown in a comparison of third- and tenth-floor measurements shown in Fig. 50.8. Note that L_{50} levels are essentially the same, while L_{10} levels have decreased only 2 dB with height.

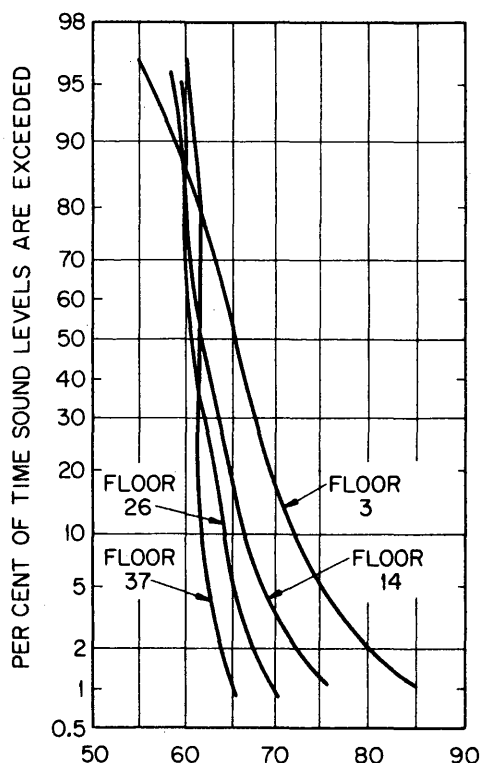


FIG. 50.17 Cumulative distributions of A-weighted sound levels measured outside a 39-story apartment building in New York City.

Indoor vs. Outdoor Noise Measurements. Most community noise surveys rely primarily on outdoor noise measurements; usually, they are convenient to make, and they may be related to outdoor noise sources. However, from the standpoint of defining the noise environment to which people are actually exposed during their daily routine, outdoor measurements are inadequate and misleading because such data neglect the noise contributions of the many indoor noise sources and the noises arising from "people" activities.

A comparison of outdoor and indoor noise environments clearly illustrates these discrepancies. Figure 50.18 shows the difference between the outdoor and indoor hourly average (A-weighted) sound levels shown in Fig. 50.7 for an urban downtown office. Note the sharp change in the differences between outside and inside sound levels for the hours of office activity, approximately 8:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. Outdoor and indoor hourly average (A-weighted) sound levels measured at two residential sites are shown in Fig. 50.19; measurements at both

sites compare sound levels in living rooms with outdoor measurements. Note the differences in patterns of noise exposure.

PREDICTION OF COMMUNITY NOISE

Methods for predicting community noise depend on information or assumptions concerning the principal outdoor noise sources. If a community is exposed to noise from a single "strong" source, the community noise can be predicted solely from consideration of that source. Thus for communities close to airports or major highways, the appropriate aircraft and highway noise prediction models provide predictions of the community noise. If the noise is due to several local sources, the contributions of each can be calculated and then combined.^{16*} However, in many communities, the noise environment results from many sources, both distant and close. Predictions based only on local sources (e.g., traffic on a local residential street) generally lead to an underestimation of the noise environment. Predictions of community noise usually are based on more or less distant,

*It is tedious to calculate the combined noise level distribution from the noise level distributions of individual noise sources. However, if the values of the equivalent-continuous level L_{eq} for each source are known, the resulting combined equivalent-continuous sound level can be calculated by use of Fig. 1.14.

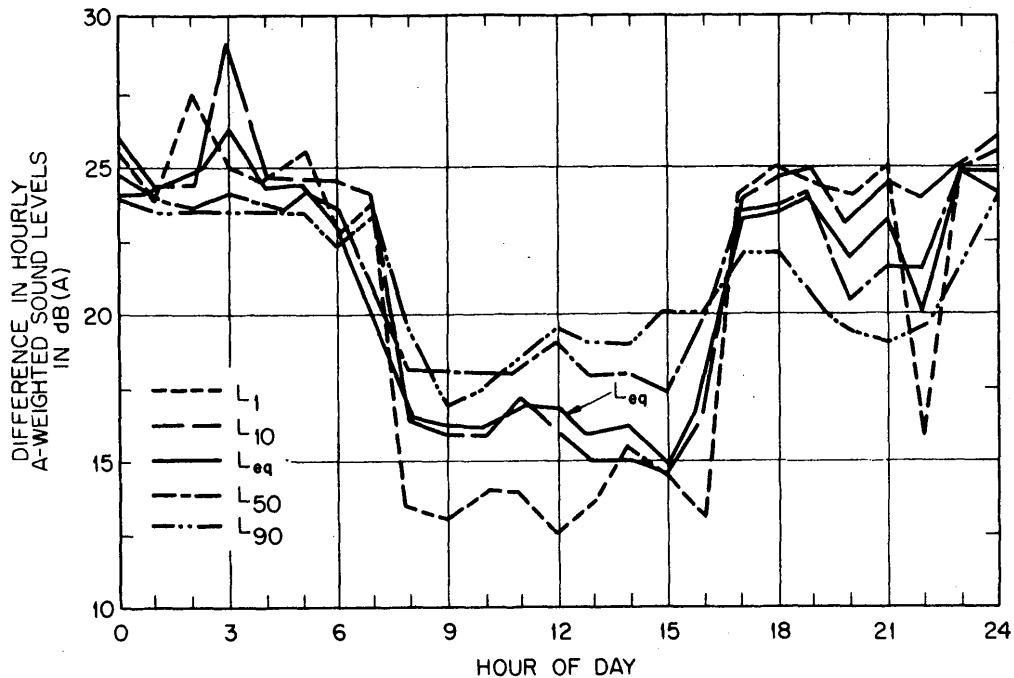


FIG. 50.18 Differences between outside and inside hourly average A-weighted sound levels for urban downtown office building, Los Angeles.

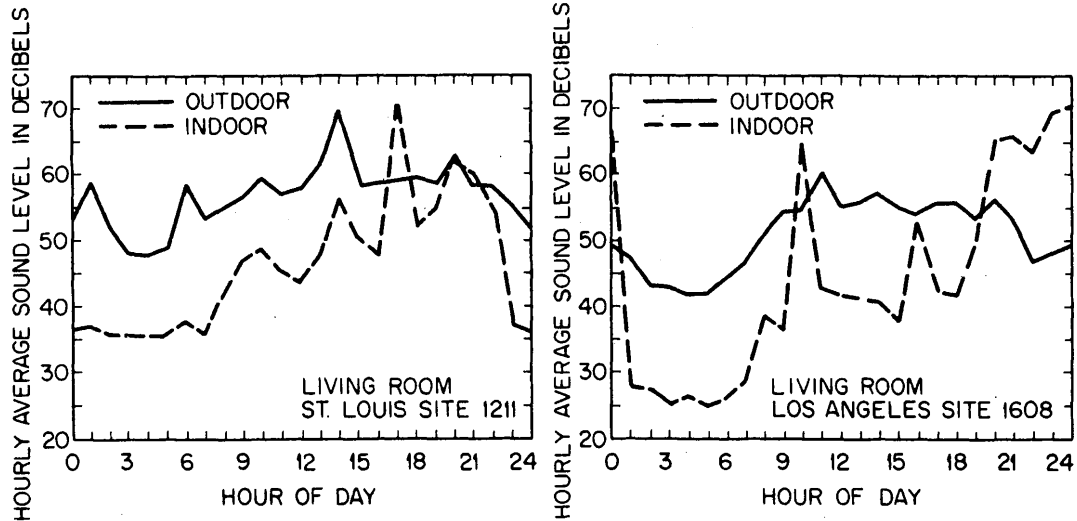


FIG. 50.19 Comparison of indoor (living room) and outdoor hourly average A-weighted sound levels at two residential sites.

undefined noise sources. To this, the contributions of local noise sources must be added when they are significant.

Prediction of General Community Noise from Population Density

One method for predicting community noise assumes that motor vehicle traffic is the most important single contributor to the noise environment for communities not located near major highways or airports.¹⁰ It considers that over a wide range of population densities and total urban populations, the number of automobiles per person is almost constant, that the ratio of trucks in service to automobiles is almost constant, and that motor vehicle usage is directly proportional to population density. It also considers that if limited-access-highway traffic is omitted, the average speed of motor vehicles in urban areas is essentially constant. According to this predictive method, the day-night average sound level L_{dn} from the population density in the vicinity of the residential site is given by

$$L_{dn} = 10 \log_{10} p + A \quad \text{dB} \quad (50.3)$$

where p is the population density. If p is expressed in people per square mile, $A = 22$ dB; if p is expressed in people per square kilometer, $A = 26$ dB. This equation applies to community areas which are not located near strong localized noise sources. To this value must be added the contributions from strong noise sources such as major highways, railroads, industrial plants, or aircraft. For example, suppose that the population density in a suburban area is 772 inhabitants per square kilometer (2000 inhabitants per square mile). Then, according to Eq. (50.3), the day-night average sound level is 55 dB.

Estimates of the Distribution of Outdoor Noise with Population

Table 50.2 shows an estimate of the number of people in the U.S.A. exposed to various outdoor day-night average sound levels.¹⁷ These data include populations heavily affected by freeway and airport noise.

TABLE 50.2 Number of People in the U.S.A. Living in Residences Exposed to Various Outdoor Day-Night Average Sound Levels

Day-night level, dB*	Number of people, millions					Total
	Traffic only	Traffic and aircraft	Traffic and construction†	Traffic and rail	Traffic and industrial	
> 80	0.1	0.1				0.2
> 75	0.9	0.5		0.1		1.5
> 70	4.5	2.2	0.2	1.0	0.2	8.1
> 65	15.2	7.6	0.8	3.0	1.2	27.8
> 60	36.6	16.1	2.8	4.4	3.7	63.6
> 58	49.2	24.3	6.0	6.0	6.9	92.4

*The distribution starts at 58 dB, since the analysis involves combining distributions of population at 55 dB and above.

†Includes only residential exposure to construction noise.

Source: After Ref. 17.

CONSIDERATIONS FOR UNDERTAKING A COMMUNITY NOISE SURVEY

The purposes of the survey, its scope, and the desired accuracy of measurements will have a major influence on the survey complexity, duration, and costs. Thus, these major survey requirements should be clearly stated. With these defined, the problems of community noise measurement reduces to two issues:

1. Ensure that sufficient, statistically independent data are collected such that the desired accuracy and significance are achieved.
2. If the purpose is to measure the community noise produced by a particular source, ensure that the measurements include substantially all of the sound produced by that source without contribution from other extraneous sound sources.

Sometimes the purpose of the community noise measurements is to measure the ambient noise level. Such measurements may be used to verify that a site meets the noise requirements for a proposed land use, or it may be used to monitor long-term community noise trends, etc. Measurement of ambient noise is usually the simplest type of community noise measurement, since, in this case, all noises at a site are included in the measurement. In making such measurements, it is important to ensure that the duration of a continuous measurement is long enough, or that the number of sampled measurements is sufficient for the desired accuracy.

Statistical accuracy of measurements can be increased only by additional independent information, either from added independent acoustical data or from nonacoustical data such as information concerning the operations of the various noise sources.

Data samples which are too close together in time are not independent. Consider acoustical data that are 1-day measurements of the day-night average level; the dominant noise source is a nearby freeway, and the measurement site is downwind of the freeway on a given measurement day. Then at many locations in the world it is likely that the site will be downwind on the next day. Typical weather patterns can be such that only samples several days or more apart are truly independent. Weather patterns may also affect the operations of the source, as well as the acoustical sound propagation. Wind direction affects runway usage at an airport, and this, in turn, affects the noise received in the community. Also, the source itself may have a temporal pattern. The freeway may be busier on weekdays, the road to the beach may be busier on the weekend, the factory may close on the weekend, and the airport may have many extra charter flights on Saturday.

The more difficult situation is the community measurement of the noise from a specific source such as an airport, a highway, or a factory. In this case one must not only solve the temporal measurement accuracy questions but also ensure that the acoustical measurements include virtually all of the noise produced by the source under study without including significant amounts of noise from any other noise sources. For example, one may wish to sample the airport noise near an airport to compare measured data with computer-predicted levels. In this case, the measurements must be such that noise from all other sources (e.g., factories, roadways, and freeways) is of sufficiently low level that it does not appreciably increase the measured results.

Typically, community noise measurement of a specific source can be accom-

plished only with careful selection and monitoring of measurement sites. This may sometimes dictate the need for observers at the site or complex acoustical and nonacoustical signal processing. At an airport, one can require that valid data be such that two monitors in a line sequentially measure (acoustically) appropriate levels, in the correct sequence and with the correct temporal spacing for the operation as listed by the aviation authorities at the airport. So in this example, one is applying three tests to the data: (1) the source must be operational—a plane is flying, (2) the temporal sequence at adjacent monitors is such that it fits the operation of the source, and (3) the acoustical levels are within expected bounds for the aircraft operation being performed.

Long-Term Temporal Sampling Requirements

The problem of long-term temporal sampling can be broken down into two predominant variables. First, weather conditions affect the propagation of sound from source to receiver. Wind direction and its altitude profile and the presence (or absence) and altitude profile of low-level temperature inversions are the primary factors affecting sound propagation over distances of as little as 100 m (328 ft). Relative humidity is a significant factor controlling the quantity of sound absorbed by the atmosphere. These factors may vary with season. Winds may be southerly in summer and northerly in winter, temperature inversions may be common in winter and rare in summer, and relative humidity may vary with the season, being highest in the spring.

The variation of received community sound with weather conditions increases with increasing distance from the sound source and the spectral content of the sound source. In general, variation increases with distance and sound frequency. Typical community sound sources will vary 10 dB at 300 m (984 ft) and will vary by 40 dB or more at 3 km (1.9 mi). Since weather is the primary factor affecting sound propagation, in the absence of other information, it is impossible to measure average sound levels any faster than it is possible to measure the average weather conditions on which the sound propagation is based. If wind is the primary variable at a given site, then it is impossible to accurately measure the average received sound unless one measures long enough to incorporate a good average of wind conditions or otherwise takes into account the variation of received sound with weather.

A means to avoid protracted community noise measurements is to measure the received sound under a set variety of weather conditions, especially for spatially fixed sound sources. One could measure the received noise from a factory under downwind, upwind, and crosswind conditions. Then, using long-term weather statistics, one could compute a predicted average for the received sound.

Instrumentation and Measurement Considerations

Special Instrumentation. Portable equipment is available for measuring noise continuously over 24-hour periods. Typically, such equipment can operate one or more days without need for servicing. A-weighted sound levels are sampled at frequent intervals (1/8- to 2-second intervals) and stored for further processing or printout. Typical capabilities of such equipment include the calculation of the equivalent-continuous sound level L_{eq} and levels for various percentiles for hourly or other specified time periods. Some equipment will also calculate the day-night average sound level for each 24 hours of measurement. Some equip-

ment will also have additional capabilities for measuring the level, time of occurrence, and duration of individual noise events whose levels exceed a selected noise threshold.

Time-Sampling of Noises. Occasionally, it is convenient to estimate the 24-hour noise exposure from sampled (rather than continuous) measurements. Then the noise is sampled at more or less regular periods throughout the day by either of the following techniques.

Method 1. Obtain a continuous sample of noise for a duration of X minutes each hour during a 24-hour period (where X is a number less than 60), e.g., 5-, 10-, or 20-minute samples. Record such samples on tape, or measure the A-weighted sound levels directly.

Method 2. Record many short samples on tape (typically 2 to 10 seconds in duration, spaced at equal intervals throughout a period of 1 hour). For example, with this sampling technique (sometimes called *microsampling*), the noise might be measured a total of 10 minutes during an hour, with the acquisition of sixty 10-second samples.

The differences between the noise level statistics obtained from such samples and those obtained by continuous observation depend on the variability in the noise environment and the number of discrete noise events that may occur. Close to a busy freeway, a short sample a few minutes in duration will show statistics very similar to those for a continuous hour sample. In contrast, where one or two noise events, such as an aircraft flyover, determine the L_1 and L_{eq} values for that hour, short samples may show large differences.

For most situations, where there are likely to be a relatively large number of events occurring per hour (20 per hour or more), sampling of 10 minutes per hour provides reasonable accuracy; if practicable, the 10 minutes should be composed of several shorter samples distributed throughout the hour. Where the equivalent-continuous sound levels are largely influenced by a few noisy events occurring per hour (aircraft flyovers, for example), it is much better to obtain a measurement of only those few noisy events than to attempt random samplings over the time period. Often information can be obtained on the average number of noise events that occur, thus enabling one to estimate values of the equivalent-continuous (A-weighted) sound level from measurements of only a few discrete events.

"Master-Slave" Measurements. Continuous 24-hour measurement capabilities can be augmented significantly in many situations by sampling noise at intervals at other auxiliary positions in the vicinity of a 24-hour monitor location. A comparison of the short sample levels with those measured at the continuous monitor position at the same time will establish the differences in the noise environment at the auxiliary stations with respect to the "master" station and will enable one to estimate 24-hour noise exposure at the auxiliary stations from limited sampling base. Similarly, long-term levels can be predicted quite accurately by a comparison of short-term (over several days) monitoring data obtained at one site with continuous (long term) noise monitoring data at another site.¹⁸

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- **Part Title:** Occupational Safety and Health Standards
- **Subpart:** G
- **Subpart Title:** Occupational Health and Environmental Control
- **Standard Number:** 1910.95
- **Title:** Occupational noise exposure.
- **Appendix:** A , B , C , D , E , F , G , H , I
- **GPO Source:** e-CFR

1910.95(a)

Protection against the effects of noise exposure shall be provided when the sound levels exceed those shown in Table G-16 when measured on the A scale of a standard sound level meter at slow response. When noise levels are determined by octave band analysis, the equivalent A-weighted sound level may be determined as follows:

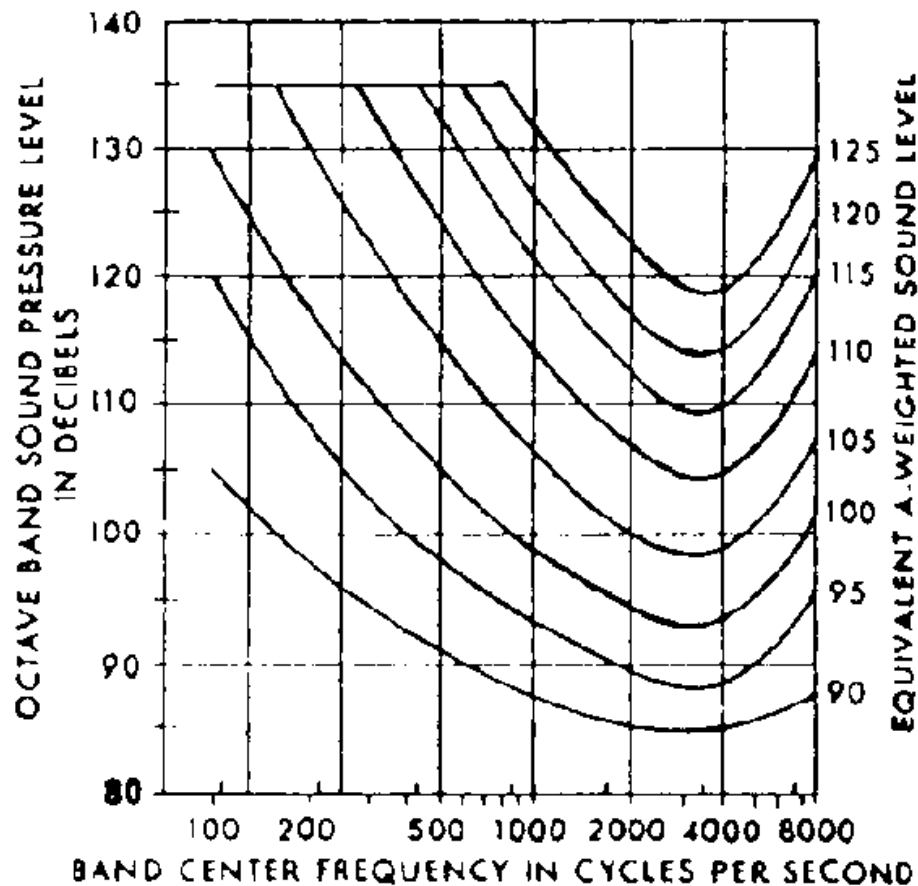


FIGURE G-9

Equivalent sound level contours. Octave band sound pressure levels may be converted to the equivalent A-weighted sound level by plotting them on this graph and noting the A-weighted sound level corresponding to the point of highest penetration into the sound level contours. This equivalent A-weighted sound level, which may differ from the actual A-weighted sound level of the noise, is used to determine exposure limits from Table 1.G-16.

1910.95(b)(1)

When employees are subjected to sound exceeding those listed in Table G-16, feasible administrative or engineering controls shall be utilized. If such controls fail to reduce sound levels within the levels of Table G-16, personal protective equipment shall be provided and used to reduce sound levels within the levels of the table.

1910.95(b)(2)

If the variations in noise level involve maxima at intervals of 1 second or less, it is to be considered continuous.

TABLE G-16 - PERMISSIBLE NOISE EXPOSURES (1)

Duration per day, hours	Sound level dBA slow response
8.....	90
6.....	92
4.....	95
3.....	97
2.....	100
1 1/2	102
1.....	105
1/2	110
1/4 or less.....	115

Footnote(1) When the daily noise exposure is composed of two or more periods of noise exposure of different levels, their combined effect should be considered, rather than the individual effect of each. If the sum of the following fractions: $C(1)/T(1) + C(2)/T(2) + \dots + C(n)/T(n)$ exceeds unity, then, the mixed exposure should be considered to exceed the limit value. C_n indicates the total time of exposure at a specified noise level, and T_n indicates the total time of exposure permitted at that level. Exposure to impulsive or impact noise should not exceed 140 dB peak sound pressure level.

1910.95(c)

"Hearing conservation program."

1910.95(c)(1)

The employer shall administer a continuing, effective hearing conservation program, as described in paragraphs (c) through (o) of this section, whenever employee noise exposures equal or exceed an 8-hour time-weighted average sound level (TWA) of 85 decibels measured on the A scale (slow response) or, equivalently, a dose of fifty percent. For purposes of the hearing conservation program, employee noise exposures shall be computed in accordance with appendix A and Table G-16a, and without regard to any attenuation provided by the use of personal protective equipment.

1910.95(c)(2)

For purposes of paragraphs (c) through (n) of this section, an 8-hour time-weighted average of 85 decibels or a dose of fifty percent shall also be referred to as the action level.

1910.95(d)

"Monitoring."

1910.95(d)(1)

When information indicates that any employee's exposure may equal or exceed an 8-hour time-weighted average of 85 decibels, the employer shall develop and implement a monitoring program.

1910.95(d)(1)(i)

The sampling strategy shall be designed to identify employees for inclusion in the hearing conservation program and to enable the proper selection of hearing protectors.

1910.95(d)(1)(ii)

Where circumstances such as high worker mobility, significant variations in sound level, or a significant component of impulse noise make area monitoring generally inappropriate, the employer shall use representative personal sampling to comply with the monitoring requirements of this paragraph unless the employer can show that area sampling produces equivalent results.

1910.95(d)(2)(i)

All continuous, intermittent and impulsive sound levels from 80 decibels to 130 decibels shall be integrated into the noise measurements.

1910.95(d)(2)(ii)

Instruments used to measure employee noise exposure shall be calibrated to ensure measurement accuracy.

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1910.95(d)(3)

Monitoring shall be repeated whenever a change in production, process, equipment or controls increases noise exposures to the extent that:

1910.95(d)(3)(i)

Additional employees may be exposed at or above the action level; or

1910.95(d)(3)(ii)

The attenuation provided by hearing protectors being used by employees may be rendered inadequate to meet the requirements of paragraph (j) of this section.

1910.95(e)

"Employee notification." The employer shall notify each employee exposed at or above an 8-hour time-weighted average of 85 decibels of the results of the monitoring.

1910.95(f)

"Observation of monitoring." The employer shall provide affected employees or their representatives with an opportunity to observe any noise measurements conducted pursuant to this section.

1910.95(g)

"Audiometric testing program."

1910.95(g)(1)

The employer shall establish and maintain an audiometric testing program as provided in this paragraph by making audiometric testing available to all employees whose exposures equal or exceed an 8-hour time-weighted average of 85 decibels.

1910.95(g)(2)

The program shall be provided at no cost to employees.

1910.95(g)(3)

Audiometric tests shall be performed by a licensed or certified audiologist, otolaryngologist, or other physician, or by a technician who is certified by the Council of Accreditation in Occupational Hearing Conservation, or who has satisfactorily demonstrated competence in administering audiometric examinations, obtaining valid audiograms, and properly using, maintaining and checking calibration and proper functioning of the audiometers being used. A technician who operates microprocessor audiometers does not need to be certified. A technician who performs audiometric tests must be responsible to an audiologist, otolaryngologist or physician.

1910.95(g)(4)

All audiograms obtained pursuant to this section shall meet the requirements of Appendix C: "Audiometric Measuring Instruments."

1910.95(g)(5)

"Baseline audiogram."

1910.95(g)(5)(i)

Within 6 months of an employee's first exposure at or above the action level, the employer shall establish a valid baseline audiogram against which subsequent audiograms can be compared.

1910.95(g)(5)(ii)

"Mobile test van exception." Where mobile test vans are used to meet the audiometric testing obligation, the employer shall obtain a valid baseline audiogram within 1 year of an employee's first exposure at or above the action level. Where baseline audiograms are obtained more than 6 months after the employee's first exposure at or above the action level, employees shall wear hearing protectors for any period exceeding six months after first exposure until the baseline audiogram is obtained.

1910.95(g)(5)(iii)

Testing to establish a baseline audiogram shall be preceded by at least 14 hours without exposure to workplace noise. Hearing protectors may be used as a substitute for the requirement that baseline audiograms be preceded by 14 hours without exposure to workplace noise.

1910.95(g)(5)(iv)

The employer shall notify employees of the need to avoid high levels of non-occupational noise exposure during the 14-hour period immediately preceding the audiometric examination.

1910.95(g)(6)

"Annual audiogram." At least annually after obtaining the baseline audiogram, the employer shall obtain a new audiogram for each employee exposed at or above an 8-hour time-weighted average of 85 decibels.

1910.95(g)(7)

"Evaluation of audiogram."

1910.95(g)(7)(i)

Each employee's annual audiogram shall be compared to that employee's baseline audiogram to determine if the audiogram is valid and if a standard threshold shift as defined in paragraph (g)(10) of this section has occurred. This comparison may be done by a technician.

1910.95(g)(7)(ii)

If the annual audiogram shows that an employee has suffered a standard threshold shift, the employer may obtain a retest within 30 days and consider the results of the retest as the annual audiogram.

1910.95(g)(7)(iii)

The audiologist, otolaryngologist, or physician shall review problem audiograms and shall determine whether there is a need for further evaluation. The employer shall provide to the person performing this evaluation the following information:

1910.95(g)(7)(iii)(A)

A copy of the requirements for hearing conservation as set forth in paragraphs (c) through (n) of this section;

1910.95(g)(7)(iii)(B)

The baseline audiogram and most recent audiogram of the employee to be evaluated;

1910.95(g)(7)(iii)(C)

Measurements of background sound pressure levels in the audiometric test room as required in Appendix D: Audiometric Test Rooms.

1910.95(g)(7)(iii)(D)

Records of audiometer calibrations required by paragraph (h)(5) of this section.

1910.95(g)(8)

"Follow-up procedures."

1910.95(g)(8)(i)

If a comparison of the annual audiogram to the baseline audiogram indicates a standard threshold shift as defined in paragraph (g)(10) of this section has occurred, the employee shall be informed of this fact in writing, within 21 days of the determination.

1910.95(g)(8)(ii)

Unless a physician determines that the standard threshold shift is not work related or aggravated by occupational noise exposure, the employer shall ensure that the following steps are taken when a standard threshold shift occurs:

1910.95(g)(8)(ii)(A)

Employees not using hearing protectors shall be fitted with hearing protectors, trained in their use and care, and required to use them.

1910.95(g)(8)(ii)(B)

Employees already using hearing protectors shall be refitted and retrained in the use of hearing protectors and provided with hearing protectors offering greater attenuation if necessary.

1910.95(g)(8)(ii)(C)

The employee shall be referred for a clinical audiological evaluation or an otological examination, as appropriate, if additional testing is necessary or if the employer suspects that a medical pathology of the ear is caused or aggravated by the wearing of hearing protectors.

1910.95(g)(8)(ii)(D)

The employee is informed of the need for an otological examination if a medical pathology of the ear that is unrelated to the use of hearing protectors is suspected.

1910.95(g)(8)(iii)

If subsequent audiometric testing of an employee whose exposure to noise is less than an 8-hour TWA of 90 decibels indicates that a standard threshold shift is not persistent, the employer:

1910.95(g)(8)(iii)(A)

Shall inform the employee of the new audiometric interpretation; and

1910.95(g)(8)(iii)(B)

May discontinue the required use of hearing protectors for that employee.

1910.95(g)(9)

"Revised baseline." An annual audiogram may be substituted for the baseline audiogram when, in the judgment of the audiologist, otolaryngologist or physician who is evaluating the audiogram:

1910.95(g)(9)(i)

The standard threshold shift revealed by the audiogram is persistent; or

1910.95(g)(9)(ii)

The hearing threshold shown in the annual audiogram indicates significant improvement over the baseline audiogram.

1910.95(g)(10)

"Standard threshold shift."

1910.95(g)(10)(i)

As used in this section, a standard threshold shift is a change in hearing threshold relative to the baseline audiogram of an average of 10 dB or more at 2000, 3000, and 4000 Hz in either ear.

1910.95(g)(10)(ii)

In determining whether a standard threshold shift has occurred, allowance may be made for the contribution of aging (presbycusis) to the change in hearing level by correcting the annual audiogram according to the procedure described in Appendix F: "Calculation and Application of Age Correction to Audiograms."

1910.95(h)

"Audiometric test requirements."

1910.95(h)(1)

Audiometric tests shall be pure tone, air conduction, hearing threshold examinations, with test frequencies including as a minimum 500, 1000, 2000, 3000, 4000, and 6000 Hz. Tests at each frequency shall be taken separately for each ear.

1910.95(h)(2)

Audiometric tests shall be conducted with audiometers (including microprocessor audiometers) that meet the specifications of, and are maintained and used in accordance with, American National Standard Specification for Audiometers, S3.6-1969, which is incorporated by reference as specified in Sec. 1910.6.

1910.95(h)(3)

Pulsed-tone and self-recording audiometers, if used, shall meet the requirements specified in Appendix C: "Audiometric Measuring Instruments."

1910.95(h)(4)

Audiometric examinations shall be administered in a room meeting the requirements listed in Appendix D: "Audiometric Test Rooms."

1910.95(h)(5)

"Audiometer calibration."

1910.95(h)(5)(i)

The functional operation of the audiometer shall be checked before each day's use by testing a person with known, stable hearing thresholds, and by listening to the audiometer's output to make sure that the output is free from distorted or unwanted sounds. Deviations of 10 decibels or greater require an acoustic calibration.

1910.95(h)(5)(ii)

Audiometer calibration shall be checked acoustically at least annually in accordance with Appendix E: "Acoustic Calibration of Audiometers." Test frequencies below 500 Hz and above 6000 Hz may be omitted from this check. Deviations of 15 decibels or greater require an exhaustive calibration.

1910.95(h)(5)(iii)

An exhaustive calibration shall be performed at least every two years in accordance with sections 4.1.2; 4.1.3.; 4.1.4.3; 4.2; 4.4.1; 4.4.2; 4.4.3; and 4.5 of the American National Standard Specification for Audiometers, S3.6-1969. Test frequencies below 500 Hz and above 6000 Hz may be omitted from this calibration.

1910.95(i)

"Hearing protectors."

1910.95(i)(1)

Employers shall make hearing protectors available to all employees exposed to an 8-hour time-weighted average of 85 decibels or greater at no cost to the employees. Hearing protectors shall be replaced as necessary.

1910.95(i)(2)

Employers shall ensure that hearing protectors are worn:

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1910.95(i)(2)(i)

By an employee who is required by paragraph (b)(1) of this section to wear personal protective equipment; and

1910.95(i)(2)(ii)

By any employee who is exposed to an 8-hour time-weighted average of 85 decibels or greater, and who:

1910.95(i)(2)(ii)(A)

Has not yet had a baseline audiogram established pursuant to paragraph (g)(5)(ii); or

1910.95(i)(2)(ii)(B)

Has experienced a standard threshold shift.

1910.95(i)(3)

Employees shall be given the opportunity to select their hearing protectors from a variety of suitable hearing protectors provided by the employer.

1910.95(i)(4)

The employer shall provide training in the use and care of all hearing protectors provided to employees.

1910.95(i)(5)

The employer shall ensure proper initial fitting and supervise the correct use of all hearing protectors.

1910.95(j)

"Hearing protector attenuation."

1910.95(j)(1)

The employer shall evaluate hearing protector attenuation for the specific noise environments in which the protector will be used. The employer shall use one of the evaluation methods described in Appendix B: "Methods for Estimating the Adequacy of Hearing Protection Attenuation."

1910.95(j)(2)

Hearing protectors must attenuate employee exposure at least to an 8-hour time-weighted average of 90 decibels as required by paragraph (b) of this section.

1910.95(j)(3)

For employees who have experienced a standard threshold shift, hearing protectors must attenuate employee exposure to an 8-hour time-weighted average of 85 decibels or below.

1910.95(j)(4)

The adequacy of hearing protector attenuation shall be re-evaluated whenever employee noise exposures increase to the extent that the hearing protectors provided may no longer provide adequate attenuation. The employer shall provide more effective hearing protectors where necessary.

1910.95(k)

"Training program."

1910.95(k)(1)

The employer shall train each employee who is exposed to noise at or above an 8-hour time weighted average of 85 decibels in accordance with the requirements of this section. The employer shall institute a training program and ensure employee participation in the program.

1910.95(k)(2)

The training program shall be repeated annually for each employee included in the hearing conservation program. Information provided in the training program shall be updated to be consistent with changes in protective equipment and work processes.

1910.95(k)(3)

The employer shall ensure that each employee is informed of the following:

1910.95(k)(3)(i)

The effects of noise on hearing;

1910.95(k)(3)(ii)

The purpose of hearing protectors, the advantages, disadvantages, and attenuation of various types, and instructions on selection, fitting, use, and care; and

1910.95(k)(3)(iii)

The purpose of audiometric testing, and an explanation of the test procedures.

1910.95(l)

"Access to information and training materials."

1910.95(l)(1)

The employer shall make available to affected employees or their representatives copies of this standard and shall also post a copy in the workplace.

1910.95(l)(2)

The employer shall provide to affected employees any informational materials pertaining to the standard that are supplied to the employer by the Assistant Secretary.

1910.95(l)(3)

The employer shall provide, upon request, all materials related to the employer's training and education program pertaining to this standard to the Assistant Secretary and the Director.

1910.95(m)

"Recordkeeping" -

1910.95(m)(1)

"Exposure measurements." The employer shall maintain an accurate record of all employee exposure measurements required by paragraph (d) of this section.

1910.95(m)(2)

"Audiometric tests."

1910.95(m)(2)(i)

The employer shall retain all employee audiometric test records obtained pursuant to paragraph (g) of this section:

1910.95(m)(2)(ii)

This record shall include:

1910.95(m)(2)(ii)(A)

Name and job classification of the employee;

1910.95(m)(2)(ii)(B)

Date of the audiogram;

1910.95(m)(2)(ii)(C)

The examiner's name;

1910.95(m)(2)(ii)(D)

Date of the last acoustic or exhaustive calibration of the audiometer; and

1910.95(m)(2)(ii)(E)

Employee's most recent noise exposure assessment.

1910.95(m)(2)(ii)(F)

The employer shall maintain accurate records of the measurements of the background sound pressure levels in audiometric test rooms.

1910.95(m)(3)

"Record retention." The employer shall retain records required in this paragraph (m) for at least the following periods.

1910.95(m)(3)(i)

Noise exposure measurement records shall be retained for two years.

1910.95(m)(3)(ii)

Audiometric test records shall be retained for the duration of the affected employee's employment.

1910.95(m)(4)

"Access to records." All records required by this section shall be provided upon request to employees, former employees, representatives designated by the individual employee, and the Assistant Secretary. The provisions of 29 CFR 1910.1020 (a)-(e) and (g)-(i) apply to access to records under this section.

1910.95(m)(5)

"Transfer of records." If the employer ceases to do business, the employer shall transfer to the successor employer all records required to be maintained by this section, and the successor employer shall retain them for the remainder of the period prescribed in paragraph (m)(3) of this section.

1910.95(n)
"Appendices."
1910.95(n)(1)
Appendices A, B, C, D, and E to this section are incorporated as part of this section and the contents of these appendices are mandatory.
1910.95(n)(2)
Appendices F and G to this section are informational and are not intended to create any additional obligations not otherwise imposed or to detract from any existing obligations.
1910.95(o)
"Exemptions." Paragraphs (c) through (n) of this section shall not apply to employers engaged in oil and gas well drilling and servicing operations. [39 FR 23502, June 27, 1974, as amended at 46 FR 4161, Jan. 16, 1981; 46 FR 62845, Dec. 29, 1981; 48 FR 9776, Mar. 8, 1983; 48 FR 29687, June 28, 1983; 54 FR 24333, June 7, 1989; 61 FR 5507, Feb. 13, 1996; 61 FR 9227, March 7, 1996; 71 FR 16672, April, 3, 2006; 73 FR 75584, Dec. 12, 2008]

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E. NOISE AND VIBRATION

This section evaluates the effects of the proposed project on noise and vibration levels. Potential noise and vibration impacts that would result from implementation of the proposed project are identified, and mitigation measures are recommended, if required to address significant environmental impacts.

1. Setting

The following section describes the existing noise and vibration setting within the project site and its vicinity.

a. Fundamentals of Noise and Vibration. Noise can be defined as unwanted sound. It is commonly measured with an instrument called a sound level meter. The sound level meter captures the sound with a microphone and converts it into a number called a sound level. Sound levels are expressed in units of decibels. To correlate the microphone signal to a level that corresponds to the way humans perceive noise, the A-weighting filter is used. A weighting de-emphasizes low-frequency and very high-frequency sound in a manner similar to human hearing. The use of A-weighting is required by most local General Plans as well as federal and State noise regulations (e.g., Caltrans, the Environmental Protection Agency, Occupational Safety and Health Administration, and Department of Housing and Urban Development). The abbreviation dBA is commonly used when the A-weighted sound level is reported.

Because of the time-varying nature of environmental sound, there are many descriptors that are used to quantify the sound level. Although one individual descriptor alone does not fully describe a particular noise environment, taken together, they can more accurately represent the noise environment. The maximum instantaneous noise level ($L_{\max}$) is often used to identify the loudness of a single event such as a train pass by or airplane flyover. To express the average noise level, the L_{eq} (equivalent noise level) is used. The L_{eq} can be measured over any length of time but is typically reported for periods of 15 minutes to 1 hour. The background noise level (or residual noise level) is the sound level during the quietest moments. It is usually generated by steady sources such as distant freeway traffic. It can be quantified with a descriptor called the L_{90} , which is the sound level exceeded 90 percent of the time.

To quantify the noise level over a 24-hour period, the Day/Night Average Sound Level (DNL or L_{dn}) or Community Noise Equivalent Level (CNEL) is used. These descriptors are averages like the L_{eq} except they include a 10 dB penalty during nighttime hours (and a 5 dB penalty during evening hours in the CNEL) to account for increased hearing sensitivity during these hours.

In environmental noise, a change in noise level of 3 dBA is considered a just noticeable difference. A 5 dBA change is clearly noticeable, but not dramatic. A 10 dBA change is perceived as a halving or doubling in loudness.

Noise sources such as trains and construction activities can generate ground vibration that can spread into nearby buildings and cause perceivable vibration. This perceivable vibration can cause annoyance to building occupants. In extreme cases, excessive ground vibration has the potential to cause structural damage to buildings. When assessing annoyance, vibration is typically expressed as root mean square (RMS) velocity in units of decibels of 1 micro-inch per second. To distinguish vibration

levels from noise levels, the unit is written as “VdB.” When assessing the potential for building damage, the vibration levels are expressed as peak particle velocity (PPV) in units of inches per second.

b. Noise and Vibration Measurements. To quantify the existing noise and vibration environment, a series of noise and vibration measurements was taken throughout the study area (see Figure IV.E-1). The noise measurements were taken with a Larson Davis Model 820 precision integrating sound level meter. The program included continuous 72-hour noise measurements at five locations (A through E) and short-term, 15- to 30-minute noise measurements at nine locations (1 through 9). Ground vibration measurements were also conducted at three locations near the railroad tracks (Va through Vc). The ground vibration measurements were taken with Bruel and Kjaer type 4370 accelerometers and type 2635 charge amplifiers.

Noise and vibration measurement locations were generally chosen to represent the exposure of future project buildings to traffic or rail noise. However, some locations were chosen to represent the noise environment at existing buildings to aid in the assessment of potential off-site impacts from project generated noise increases. The long-term noise measurement results are shown in Figures IV.E-2 through IV.E-6. Figure IV.E-2 plots train noise at Location A, where train noise is expected to reach the highest levels. Tables IV.E-1 and IV.E-2 summarize the results of the vibration and short-term noise measurements.

c. Traffic Noise. The project site is bounded by Horton Street and Sherwin Avenue. The measured DNL was 67 dBA along Horton Street, adjacent to the proposed Parcel A. The measured DNL was 73 dBA along Sherwin Avenue, adjacent to the existing residential building on the south side of the roadway. The noise level along Sherwin Avenue was significantly influenced by trucks accessing the Sherwin-Williams loading dock areas. In addition, some of the trucks using the loading dock remained stationary with their engines idling and this contributed to the elevated noise level.

There are currently approximately 90 truck trips generated by the Sherwin-Williams plant during an average 24-hour period (45 in and 45 out). Of these trips, 75 percent occur during the daytime hours (7:00 a.m. – 10:00 p.m.) and 25 percent during the nighttime hours (10:00 p.m. – 7:00 a.m.).¹ The trucks generally use Halleck and Hubbard Streets to access Park Avenue and 40th Street.²

Table IV.E-1: Train Vibration Measurement Results – May 25, 2005

Time	Train	Vibration Velocity, VdB		
		Va	Vb	Vc
13:58	SB Amtrak	70	58	--*
14:11	NB Amtrak	64	54	--
14:49	NB Freight	71	60	--
15:39	NB Amtrak	67	54	68
15:52	NB Freight	--	--	65
16:23	SB Amtrak	--	--	68
16:34	SB Amtrak	66	54	66
17:04	NB Amtrak	65	55	66
17:26	SB Amtrak	63	52	64
17:59	NB Amtrak	66	54	--
18:21	NB Amtrak	64	54	--
18:29	SB Amtrak	66	54	--

* No measurement.

Source: Rosen, Goldberg and Der, 2005.

¹ Hitchcock, Dale, 2005. Personal communication with LSA Associates, Inc., June 27.

² Tellez, Katherin, 2005. Personal communication with LSA Associates, Inc., June 23.

Figure IV.E-1: Noise and Vibration Measurement Locations

8x11 B&w

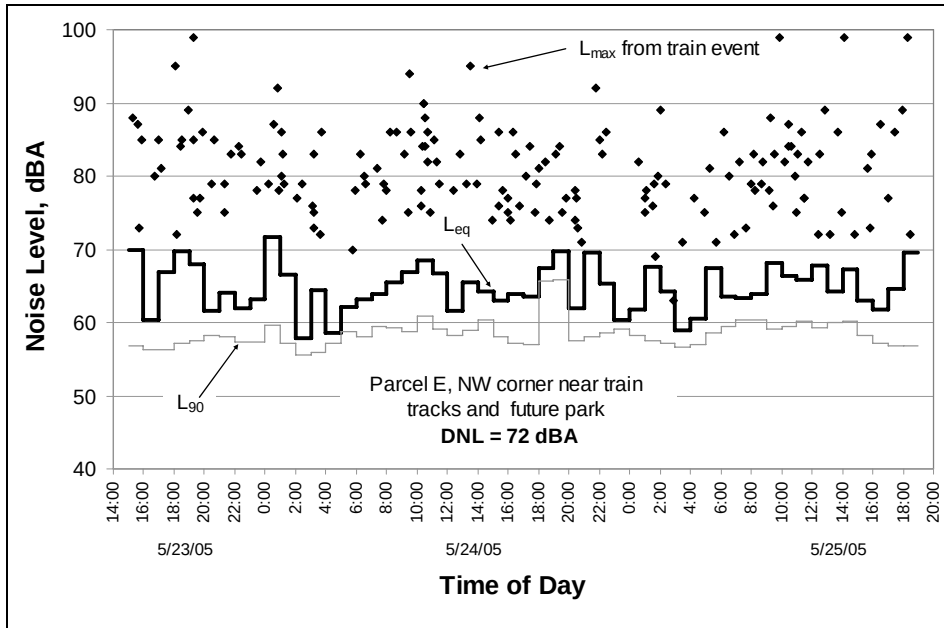


Figure IV.E-2: Long-Term Noise Measurement at Location A

Source: Rosen, Goldberg and Der, 2005.

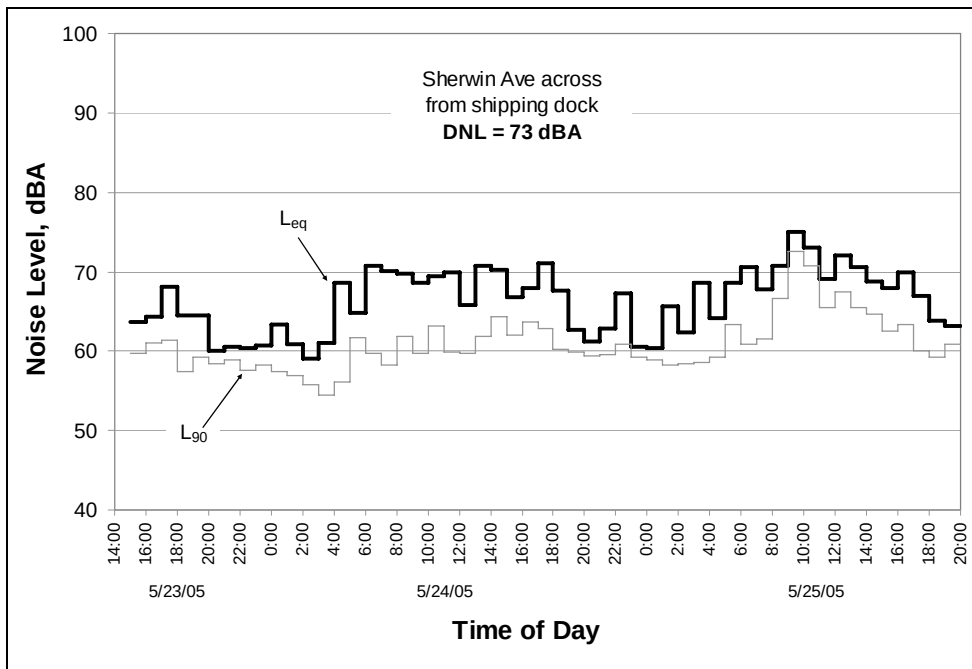


Figure IV.E-3: Long-Term Noise Measurement at Location B

Source: Rosen, Goldberg and Der, 2005.

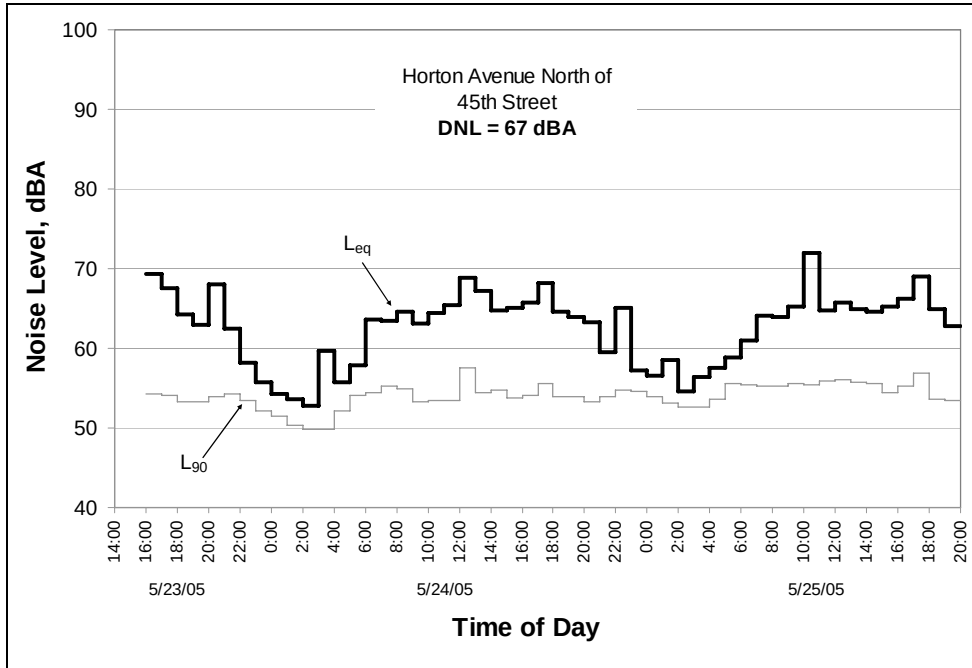


Figure IV.E-4: Long-Term Noise Measurement at Location C

Source: Rosen, Goldberg and Der, 2005.

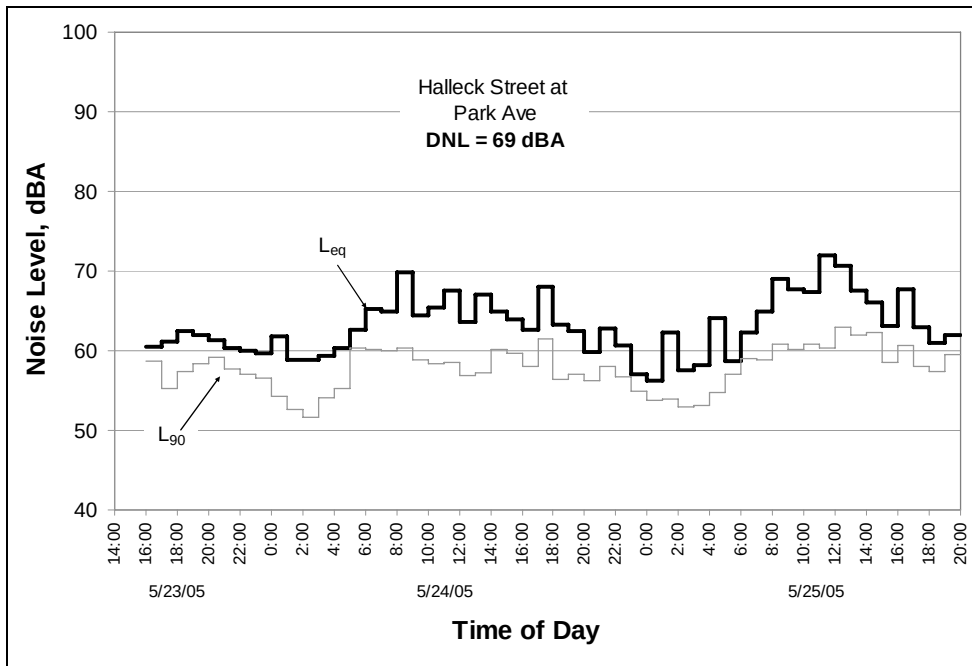


Figure IV.E-5: Long-Term Noise Measurement at Location D

Source: Rosen, Goldberg and Der, 2005.

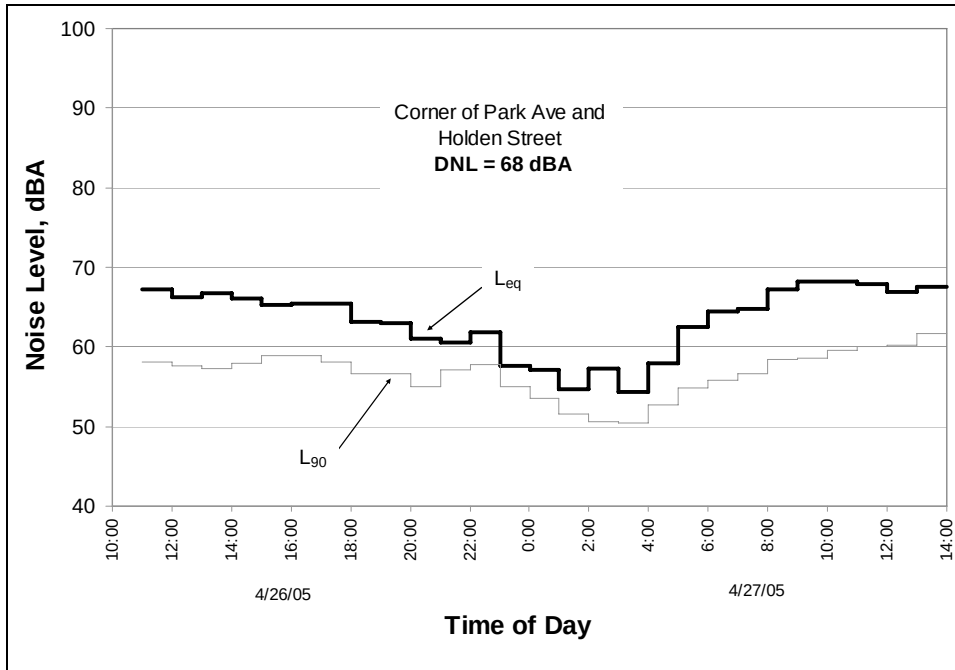


Figure IV.E-6: Long-Term Noise Measurement at Location E

Source: Rosen, Goldberg and Der, 2005.

Table IV.E-2: Short-Term Noise Measurement Results

Location	Date/Time	A-Weighted Sound Level, dBA			
		L _{eq}	L ₁₀	L ₅₀	L ₉₀
1 Parcel E, northwest corner, 100 feet east of Amtrak main line	25 May 2005 2:30– 3:00 p.m.	67	67	64	63
2 Parcel E, northeast corner	25 May 2005 5:45– 6:00 p.m.	68	64	63	62
3 Parcel D, northeast corner, across from Chiron mechanical equipment	25 May 2005 6:15– 6:30 p.m.	66	69	64	61
4 100 feet east of Halleck Street, between Sherwin Ave and Park Ave, at façade of 5-story residential building	25 May 2005 7:00– 7:15 p.m.	64	66	64	62
5 Hubbard Street, west side between Sherwin Ave and Park Ave	25 May 2005 7:00 -7:14 p.m.	57	59	56	55
6 Sherwin Ave, north side 180 feet west of Horton Street	25 May 2005 7:15 -7:39 p.m.	63	65	63	62
7 Horton Street, east side 50 feet south of 45 th Street	25 May 2005 7:30 -8:00 p.m.	61	65	58	55
8 Horton Street, east side 150 feet north of 45 th St	11 July 2005 7:45 – 8:45 a.m.	65	69	59	54
9 45 th Street north side 130 feet east of Horton Street	11 July 2005 7:45 – 8:45 a.m.	62	62	54	51

Source: Rosen, Goldberg and Der, 2005.

d. Rail Noise. There are eight parallel railroad tracks in the railroad corridor located immediately adjacent to the western property line of the site. Based on field observations, the through freight trains use the two tracks that are farthest from the site. The passenger (Amtrak) trains use the next pair of tracks which are near the center of the corridor. The tracks closest to the site are used primarily for storage and switching of railroad cars.

The long-term noise measurement at Location A was about 86 feet from the nearest through track (Amtrak). The nearest storage/switching track was 25 feet from the measurement location. Figure IV.E-2 shows the average hourly noise level (L_{eq}) as well as the maximum noise levels (L_{max}) from individual train events.

Over the two days of noise monitoring there was an average of 78 train events per day. Most of these events were through train events that generated an L_{max} of between 75 and 88 dBA. The loudest train events were up to an L_{max} of 99 dBA and included a horn blast. The train operators are not required to sound their horn as they pass by the site since there is no at-grade roadway crossing nearby. However, the operators may use their horn to warn people at their discretion.

The Amtrak trains passed by quickly while the longer freight train events lasted for up to 6 minutes. Some of the events were from switching activities that included train engines idling for longer periods of time. For example, one train idled for 36 minutes starting at 6:42 p.m. on May 24, 2005.

e. Rail Vibration. Measurements of ground vibration were made to quantify the vibration levels generated by the train events. The measurement locations Va, Vb and Vc were chosen to represent the setbacks of the closest proposed buildings on Parcels C and E. The vibration levels were measured with an accelerometer that was attached to the asphalt pavement on the existing site. The highest measured vibration level was 71 VdB. This level is near the threshold of perceptibility. The measured vibration levels are generally consistent with levels that would be expected for the slow moving trains that were observed during the measurements.

f. Industrial Noise. The major industrial noise generators in the area are the existing Sherwin-Williams plant and Chiron Corporation. Noise from process equipment at Sherwin Williams is audible along Sherwin Ave. and Horton Street. Chiron Corporation has an outdoor mechanical area along Horton Street, across from measurement location 3, which emits noise from an air-cooled chiller and boiler. In addition, a new Chiron Building, just north of the project site, has rooftop mounted fans that are clearly audible on the west end of the project site. Another industrial use in the area is the Peet's Coffee facility that has a loading dock along Horton Street, just south of the project site.

2. Criteria of Significance

The project would result in a significant noise or vibration impact if it would:

- Expose project land uses to noise exposure greater than that considered normally acceptable in the City of Emeryville General Plan Noise Element compatibility guidelines (see Table IV.E-3). The impact would be less-than-significant if the noise level inside new multi-family dwellings does not exceed an L_{dn} of 45 dBA due to exterior noise sources (CBC Section 1208A.8.2).
- Expose persons to or generate noise or vibration levels in excess of the maximum permitted levels for stationary sources as contained in the City Zoning Ordinance (Section 9.4.59). This ordinance applies to operational noise such as manufacturing processes or mechanical ventilation

Table IV.E-3: Noise/Land Use Compatibility

Land Use Category	Recommended Noise Levels, Ldn (dBA)					
	55	60	65	70	75	80
Residential:						
Low Density						
Medium to High Density						
Commercial:						
Hotel						
Office						
Restaurant, Retail						
Other						
Industrial:						
Light Industrial						
Custom Manufacturing						
Other						
Public/Quasi-Public:						
School, Library, Church,						
Hospital, Theater						
Other						
Open Space:						
All Categories						

**NORMALLY ACCEPTABLE**

Specified land use is acceptable, assuming standard building construction.

**CONDITIONALLY ACCEPTABLE**

Standard building construction is not adequate for specified land uses, however, mitigation measures may be easily employed to reduce noise to acceptable levels. An analysis of the measures by a qualified acoustical professional is required, to be approved by the City..

**NORMALLY UNACCEPTABLE**

The specified land use should be discouraged unless the City finds the project to be in the public interest and a detailed analysis by a qualified acoustical professional shows that specific measures which are to be included in the project would reduce indoor and outdoor noise to acceptable levels. The analysis and attenuation measures must be approved by the City.

Source: City of Emeryville General Plan, 1993.

equipment. This ordinance does not apply to operations involved in the construction or demolition of structures, or motor vehicles or trains.

- Generate construction related noise outside the specific hour limitation in the City Municipal Code Construction Noise Limits (Section 5-13.05). The City's Municipal Code limits construction activities to (7:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. on weekdays, pile driving is restricted to 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.). Compliance with the provisions of this section would constitute a less-than- significant impact.

- Generate construction related vibration in excess of 0.2 inches per second. A groundborne vibration level in excess of 0.2 inches per second could damage fragile buildings.³
- Expose project buildings to railroad generated vibration levels which exceed recommended criteria from the Federal Transit Administration (FTA). The FTA suggests acceptable ground vibration levels for housing near rail lines. For infrequent rail events (less than 70 per day) the criterion is 80 VdB. For frequent rail events (greater than 70) the criterion is 72 VdB.⁴
- Expose existing noise sensitive land use to an increase in L_{dn} of more than 5 dBA; or between 3 and 5 dBA if the future noise level will be greater than considered “normally acceptable” for the receiving land use according to the Noise Element (Table IV.E-3). Noise level increases of 3 dBA or less in the L_{dn} are considered less than significant regardless of the noise level at the receiving land use.

3. Impacts and Mitigation Measures

This section analyzes impacts related to noise and vibration that could result from implementation of the proposed project. The analysis of project impacts is organized by the project components and development scenarios described in Chapter III, Project Description. An assessment of potential impacts is provided for each project component, and mitigation measures are recommended as necessary.

a. Interim Phases. All three interim phases have the potential to generate high noise levels that can interfere with activities and annoy neighbors. The City noise ordinance limits hours of construction to help minimize annoyance and potential complaints that may result from site activities during the interim phases.

Annoyance associated with noise generated by construction activities that take place during the hours allowed by the Municipal Code is not considered a significant environmental impact. However, in order to minimize the potential for activity interference and annoyance from the interim phases (demolition and construction), the applicant may want to consider implementing, or the City may want to require as conditions of approval, the following measures from the Draft RAP (which would be implemented during the remediation phase) during the decommissioning/demolition, and construction phases:

- Relocate stationary equipment (if feasible) to minimize noise impacts on the community.
- Provide portable enclosures for stationary equipment and particularly noisy areas on the site;
- Use self-adjusting ambient-sensitive back-up alarms, manually-adjustable alarms on low setting, use of observers, and/or schedule activities so that alarm noise is minimized;
- Install and maintain intake and exhaust mufflers on all equipment, particularly pneumatic impact tools;
- Install acoustically attenuating shields, shrouds, or enclosures on noise-producing equipment;

³ Federal Transit Administration, U.S. Department of Transportation, 1995. *Transit Noise and Vibration Impact Assessment*.

⁴ Ibid.

- Line or cover hoppers, conveyor transfer points, storage bins, and chutes with sound-deadening material;
- Minimize the use or air of gasoline-driven hand tools;
- Maintain all equipment, such that parts of vehicles and loads are secure against rattling and banging; and
- Use shields, impervious fences, or other physical sound barriers, to inhibit transmission of noise to sensitive receptors.

In addition to the aforementioned measures that may be implemented as part of the remediation period, the project applicant may want to consider implementing, or the City may want to require as conditions of approval, the following measures:

- Prepare demolition, remediation and construction noise control plans that identify detailed, site-specific noise attenuation measures that will be used. The plans should be prepared under the supervision of a qualified acoustical consultant. Prior to commencing each interim phase, the noise control plan should be submitted for review and approval by the City.
- Limit particularly noisy activities (i.e. those that generate a noise level greater than 85 dBA at any noise sensitive receiver) to the hours of 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.
- Prepare a procedure for allowing persons around the project site to notify City Building Division staff and the Emeryville Police Department of high noise levels;
- Prepare a plan for posting signs on-site pertaining to permitted construction days and hours and complaint procedures, and the appropriate person to notify in the event of a problem;
- List telephone numbers of responsible personnel for both regular construction hours and off-hours;
- Designate an on-site construction complaint manager for the project;
- Notify neighbors within 300 feet of the project construction area at least 30 days in advance of pile-driving and/or other extreme noise-generating activities about the estimated duration of the activity; and
- Conduct a pre-construction meeting with the job inspectors and the general contractor/on-site project manager to confirm that noise mitigation and practices (including construction hours, neighborhood notification, posted signs, etc.) are completed.

A discussion of the potential noise and vibration impacts specific to each interim phase is provided below.

(1) Decommissioning and Demolition (Phase I-1). As part of this phase, the Sherwin-Williams facility would be decommissioned and all of the existing structures within the project site would be demolished, with the exception of Buildings 1 and 31, which would be retained.

The noisier activities associated with this phase will be the demolition of the existing Sherwin-Williams plant building. Details regarding demolition equipment have not been finalized; however, it is assumed that the noisiest equipment will be concrete breaking tools (jack-hammers and hydraulic hammers) and mobile diesel equipment (trucks and front-end loaders). Based on published noise data

for construction equipment, mobile diesel equipment typically generates noise levels of about 88 dBA at a distance of 50 feet (see Figure IV.E-7). Based on measurements of demolition activities at 1401 Park Avenue, a hydraulic hammer breaking concrete generates a maximum noise level (L_{max}) of 95 dBA at a distance of 50 feet.

Table IV.E-4 shows the expected noise levels at buildings adjacent to the project site when demolition activities are at their closest within the project site. The noise levels are calculated using the standard formula that noise level drops off at a rate of 6 dBA per doubling of distance from the source.

The predicted demolition noise levels are sufficient to cause interference with noise sensitive activities such as speech outdoors and indoors (with windows open). Demolition activities would be limited to the following times: weekdays from 7:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. for general demolition activities, and from 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. for demolition activities that generate noise levels exceeding 85 dBA at adjacent noise-sensitive land uses. Since these hours are consistent with the limitations for construction noise in the Municipal Code, noise generated during the decommissioning and demolition phase of the project would be considered less than significant. [Discuss funding with City] [what about annoyance?] [What about associated truck trips?]

Table IV.E-4: Demolition Noise at Nearest Land Uses

Receiver	Distance (feet)	Mobile Diesel Equipment Noise Level, dBA	Hydraulic Hammer Breaking Concrete, dBA
Lofts on Horton	145	81	86
Chiron Southernmost Bldg.	220	77	82
Commercial on Sherwin (Ex P&H Associates)	57	89	94
Residential on Sherwin (Ex Hamilton Senior Homes LLC)	70	87	92
Commercial to the west	225	77	82
Future Chiron Bldg west of Horton (estimated location)	180	79	84

Source: Rosen, Goldberg and Der, 2005.

(2) Remediation (Phase I-2). The types of noise sources associated with the remediation phase are very similar to those that would be involved in the demolition activities described in the previous section. Table IV.E-5 lists the various stages of the remediation process and identifies anticipated noise sources and their duration. Table IV.E-6 lists anticipated noise levels associated with remediation activities at buildings around the project site. This information is based on the Draft Feasibility/Remedial Action Plan (Draft RAP) dated May 2005.

The Draft RAP includes specific noise mitigation measures to minimize impacts to neighboring areas and comply with the City Noise Ordinance. According to the Draft RAP, the contractor would identify sources of noise and would use specific noise reduction methods and materials.

According to the Draft RAP, remediation activities are expected to be conducted during allowable weekday hours (7:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. for general demolition activities; 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. for pile driving and similarly loud activities). Certain activities, such as truck loading and off-site transport of hazardous debris and soil, could be conducted during nighttime hours in order to avoid day-time truck traffic impacts.

If remediation activities are proposed outside of the weekday allowable construction noise time limits, the remediation contractor would be required to apply to the City for a waiver, as described in Section 5-13.06 of the City's Noise Ordinance. The procedures for waiver application require submittal of a description of the type of work to be performed, the type of equipment to be used, notifi-

Figure IV.E-7: Construction Equipment Noise Levels

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Table IV.E-5: Remediation Noise Sources

Remediation Stage	On-Site Activities	Off-Site Trucks	Duration of Stage
Removal, treatment, and off-site disposal of the Raised Cap.	Excavator with hydraulic impact hammer, Front end loader, 1 or 2 dump trucks.	25 - 35 trucks per day, each way.	10 - 15 days total.
In situ soil treatment.	One or more vertical augers (25 feet below ground).	Five trucks for equipment to arrive and depart. Five truck loads of materials (Portland cement and ferrous sulfite).	Up to 6 weeks.
Excavation of slurry wall breaches.	Excavator with hydraulic impact hammer, front end loader, 1 or 2 dump trucks.	35 truck trips for removal of saturated soil and 35 trucks for imported backfill.	Concurrent with in situ soil treatment.
Excavation, handling, and off-site disposal of soil.	Rubber-tired diesel-powered excavator; front-end loader, for placing excavated soil into a dump truck; one or two 15- to 20-yard dump trucks, for transporting soil from the excavation to the stockpile staging area. [Applicant: Will there be ventilation equipment for capturing VOC vapors in Building 35?]	35 to 50 truck trips per workday (or 10 gondola rail cars per day).	8 to 12 weeks for off-site disposal of soil.
Backfilling and compaction of imported fill in the excavation.	One or more diesel-powered loaders to move imported fill from the stockpile area to the excavation for placement and compaction.	35 to 50 truck trips per workday (or 10 gondola rail cars per day). [Note: We assumed same number of truck trips for excavation. If there will be less import because of excavation required for project construction, these numbers would change.]	

Source: Rosen, Goldberg and Der, 2005.

cations to neighbors, and, among other requirements, a description of the types of construction practices to be used to minimize noise. Since the hours that remediation activities would occur would be consistent with the limitations for construction noise in the Municipal Code and any variation from the allowable hours would be subject to a waiver review by the City, noise generated during the remediation phase of the project by on-site equipment would be considered less than significant.

Table IV.E-6: Remediation Noise at Nearest Land Uses

Receiver	Mobile Diesel Equipment		Hydraulic Hammer Breaking Concrete at Raised Cap	
	Distance, Feet	Noise Level, dBA	Distance, Feet	Noise Level, dBA
Lofts on Horton	60	86	60	93
Chiron Southernmost Bldg.	132	80	132	87
Commercial on Sherwin (Ex P&H Associates)	57	87	420	77
Residential on Sherwin (Ex Hamilton Senior Homes)	60	86	419	77
Commercial to the west	225	75	545	74
Future Chiron Bldg west of Horton (estimated location)	50	88	50	95

Source: Rosen, Goldberg and Der, 2005.

The proposed remediation would include additional truck trips to haul treated material from the site and to bring in fill. The designated truck route would be from the site, west to Halleck Street and

then south along Halleck Street to West Grand Avenue via Mandela Parkway. According to the Draft RAP, there would be an average of 35 to 50 daily truck trips during the remediation project.

The noise from remediation trucks was calculated using the FHWA Traffic Noise Prediction Model (FHWA-RD-77-108). It is assumed that all of the truck trips would occur during daytime hours since the Emeryville Noise Ordinance limits construction-type activities to daytime hours. The L_{dn} from 100 truck events per day (50 in and 50 out) would be 56 dBA at 50 feet from the roadway centerline. This noise level was adjusted based on the distance from the roadway to the building façade, assuming the level at decreases/increases a rate of 3 dBA per doubling/halving of distance.

The effect of the remediation trucks on future noise levels was determined by adding the noise level that would be generated by the new remediation truck trips to the existing, measured noise levels. This methodology results in a conservative assessment, since the remediation activities would take place after the Sherwin-Williams plant is decommissioned and trucking activities associated with Sherwin-Williams' operations have ceased.

Existing residences along Halleck Street are currently exposed to an L_{dn} of 63 to 68 dBA. The additional noise from the remediation trucks would increase existing noise levels by less than 1 dBA at these residences, which is considered a less-than-significant impact.

(3) Construction (Phase I-3). Construction activities would occur in a phased manner over a period extending up to 7 years. Construction would generally consist of site grading to create building pads, foundation work (including installation of piles) and assembly of the building structures. There would also be some related activities, such as trenching for utilities and delivery/removal of materials.

Municipal Code Construction Noise Limits. In accordance with the City Noise Ordinance, demolition activities would be limited to the following times: weekdays from 7:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. for general demolition activities, and from 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. for pile driving and similarly loud activities. Therefore, the construction phase of the proposed project would result in a less-than-significant noise impact.

Construction-Related Vibration.

Pile driving has the potential to generate both high airborne sound levels and groundborne vibration levels. Table IV.E-7 shows the estimated typical and maximum groundborne vibration levels associated with pile driving within the project site at structures around the site. These estimates are based on a general method for predicting vibration from pile driving.⁵

Table IV.E-7: Groundborne Vibration Levels from Pile Driving

Source	Receiver	Distance (Feet)	Peak Particle Velocity (PPV), in/sec	
			Typical	Upper Range
Parcel D	Lofts on Horton	60	0.17	0.41
Parcel D	Chiron Southernmost Bldg.	132	0.05	0.13
Parcel B	Commercial on Sherwin (Ex P&H Associates)	57	0.19	0.44
Parcel C	Residential on Sherwin (Ex Hamilton Senior Homes LLC)	68	0.14	0.34
Parcel C	Commercial to the west	211	0.03	0.06
Parcel D	Future Chiron Bldg west of Horton (estimated location)	70	0.14	0.32
Parcel E	Future Chiron Bldg west of Horton (estimated location)	40	0.32	0.75

Source: Rosen, Goldberg and Der, 2005.

⁵ Ibid.

Phase I-3 Impact NOISE-1: Based on the upper range of predicted vibration levels, pile driving within the project site has the potential to generate groundborne vibration levels in excess of 0.2 inches per second at adjacent structures within 100 feet of the site. (S)

The typical vibration level at existing buildings around the project site that would be generated by pile driving within the site would be in the range that is considered safe for fragile buildings (less than 0.2 inches per second). However, maximum pile driving-related vibration levels could damage buildings around the site. Implementation of the following mitigation measure would reduce this impact to a less-than-significant level:

Phase I-3 Mitigation Measure NOISE-1: The project applicant shall prepare a detailed pile driving vibration impact assessment to determine the potential for damage to adjacent structures from the type of piles and installation methods to be used. All recommendations in the impact assessment shall be incorporated into construction plans for the project. The study shall involve vibration measurements during the test pile phase. (LTS)

b. Operation Phase. A discussion of the potential noise effects associated with the use and operation of the new development once it is complete is provided below. Each of the three development variants were evaluated and the potential adverse effects identified for each development variant were similar. Table IV.D-8 lists the potential operation related significant noise impacts and recommended mitigation measures and identifies what impacts are associated with each development variant. The discussion of the impacts also explains when the impact associated with a particular development variant would be different.

(1) City and State Noise Compatibility Standards for new development. Land uses within the project site would be exposed to noise levels that vary depending on the adjacent source (e.g., roadway or railroad) and the distance to the source. Table IV.E-9 shows the future noise exposure at the various parcels within the project site for each development variant and identifies the facades that would be most affected.

Traffic noise levels in Table IV.E-9 are calculated using the FHWA Traffic Noise Prediction Model (FHWA-RD-77-108). Traffic volumes are based on projections for the year 2030 with the base case project. The noise level at the east side of parcel D includes the noise contribution from the existing outdoor Chiron mechanical equipment as quantified in the noise measurements. Along the railroad, the noise levels are based on the measurements of existing conditions. It is assumed that future railroad operation noise would not increase significantly in the future since an increase of 25 percent in daily operations would be required to increase the railroad L_{dn} by only 1 dBA. The table also shows the land uses for the Maximum Residential and Base Case operational variants. Noise impacts within each project site parcel are discussed separately below for each variant.

Maximum Commercial Variant.

- **Parcel A:** This parcel would be occupied by Sherwin-Williams buildings 1 and 31 which would be adaptively re-used for commercial uses. The east façade of this building would be exposed to a future L_{dn} of 69 dBA due to traffic on Horton Street. Since this noise exposure is greater than that considered normally acceptable for new offices, this is considered a significant impact.

Table IV.E-8: Noise and Vibration Operation Phase Impacts of Project Variants

Impact	Mitigation Measure	Maximum Commercial Variant	Maximum Residential Variant	Base Case Variant
<u>NOISE-2:</u> Project uses would be exposed to noise levels greater than those considered normally acceptable. (S)	<u>NOISE-2:</u> The project applicant shall prepare an acoustical study for all buildings within the project site that identifies the measures that will be employed to meet an interior L_{dn} of 45 dBA or less (except for commercial uses on Parcel E), in accordance with the State Noise Insulation Standards. These measures could include construction of a soundwall as part of this mitigation measure. These standards are applicable to new multi-family residential projects exposed to an L_{dn} greater than 60 dBA. Typically, the required measures include sound-rated windows, exterior doors and special exterior wall construction. The acoustical study shall be prepared during the architectural design phase of the project, and all recommendations of the study shall be incorporated into the project. The acoustical study that is prepared for commercial development at Parcel E shall specify an appropriate interior noise level standard that is appropriate for anticipated commercial uses. The train noise at the Greenway and park shall be reduced to the normally acceptable level of L_{dn} 70 dBA by installing a solid barrier along the entire length of the property line with the railroad corridor. The barrier can be a solid wall or an earthen berm. The barrier shall be tall enough to block the line of sight to the trains on the through tracks located near the centerline of the corridor. Preliminary calculations indicate that a wall height of 9 to 12 feet would be sufficient, but the final height will depend on the proposed grading of the site and the location of the barrier. Alternatively, barriers shall be built locally around areas of frequent use within the park while those areas subject to transient foot traffic, such as the greenway, could remain unprotected. (LTS)	✓	✓	✓
<u>NOISE-3:</u> New commercial uses could have mechanical equipment that exceeds the City's Zoning Ordinance Noise Standards. (S)	<u>NOISE-3:</u> Acoustical studies shall be prepared that identify the expected noise levels from mechanical equipment at the property lines of adjacent noise sensitive land uses. Recommendations shall be made and needed features included in the design to meet the City's Zoning Ordinance Noise Standards. (LTS)	✓	✓	✓

Table IV.E-8 *continued*

Impact	Mitigation Measure	Maximum Commercial Variant	Maximum Residential Variant	Base Case Variant
NOISE-4: Traffic generated by the proposed project would result in significant noise level increases along 45th Street. (S)	NOISE-4: A unit-by-unit acoustical study of buildings along 45th Street that would be exposed to noise increases of more than 3 dBA as a result of the proposed project shall be performed to identify appropriate exterior window/wall modifications. These could include replacing the windows with new sound-rated windows or adding secondary glazing to the existing window openings. The window upgrades (if determined to be appropriate) shall be installed prior to project operation. However, for window upgrades to be effective, windows would need to be closed at all times. Requiring windows in existing buildings to be closed at all times would be infeasible. Implementation of this mitigation measure would help reduce noise levels but the impact would remain significant and unavoidable. (SU)	✓	✓	✓

Source: LSA Associates, Inc., 2005.

Table IV.E-9: Future Noise Exposure at the Project Land Uses

Parcel	Land Use			Facade	Noise Source	Distance From Noise Source, feet	L _{dn} , dBA
	Base Case	Maximum Commercial	Maximum Residential				
A	Residential	Commercial	Commercial and Residential	East	Horton Street	30	69
B	Residential	Residential	Residential	Upper floors of east facade	Horton Street	130	62
C	Residential	Residential	Residential	North end of west facade	Railroad	140	71
				South end of west facade	Railroad	260	67
D	Residential	Commercial	Residential	West	Railroad	340	65
				East	Horton Street	30	71
					Chiron Mechanical Equipment	78	
E	Commercial	Commercial	Residential	West	Railroad	140	71
Greenway and Park	Open Space	Open Space	Open Space		Railroad	112	72

Source: Rosen, Goldberg and Der, 2005.

- **Parcel B:** At this parcel, the traffic noise from Horton Street would be blocked by the building on Parcel A. However, there may be residences that are on upper levels that overlook the adjacent building and have a direct exposure to traffic noise from Horton Street. At these residences, the L_{dn} would be 62 dBA. Since this noise exposure is greater than that considered normally acceptable for new residential land uses, this is considered a significant impact.
- **Parcel C:** The L_{dn} at this parcel would range from 67 to 71 dBA. The north end of the parcel is closer to the railroad tracks and, therefore, exposed to higher noise levels. The proposed residential uses in on this parcel would be exposed to “conditionally acceptable” noise levels. However, since this noise exposure is greater than that considered normally acceptable for new residential land uses, this is a considered a significant impact.
- **Parcel D:** The east side of the proposed building on Parcel D would face Horton Street. It would also face the outdoor mechanical equipment located on the Chiron Property across Horton Street. The noise from these two sources would combine, resulting in an anticipated L_{dn} of 71 dBA. The west side of this building would face the railroad tracks and would be exposed to an L_{dn} of 65 dBA. Since this noise exposure is greater than that considered normally acceptable for new offices, this is considered a significant impact.
- **Parcel E:** The west and north facades of the proposed building on Parcel E would be exposed to an L_{dn} of up to 71 dBA. According to the City’s Noise Element, the limit for normally acceptable noise levels ranges from an L_{dn} of 60 dBA to an L_{dn} of 70 dBA depending on the type of commercial use. Hotels and offices are considered to be more noise-sensitive than restaurants and retail uses. Since the anticipated noise exposure at parcel E is greater than that considered normally acceptable for new commercial land uses, this is considered a significant impact.

- Greenway and Park: A Greenway and Park are proposed along with the boundary with the rail-road corridor. Train noise generates an L_{dn} of 72 dBA in this area. Since this is greater than the City's maximum normally acceptable L_{dn} of 70 dBA, this is a significant impact.

Maximum Residential Variant.

- Parcel A: Noise impacts at this parcel would be the same as those identified for the parcel under the Maximum Commercial variant.
- Parcel B: Refer to the discussion of the Maximum Commercial variant.
- Parcel C: Refer to the discussion of the Maximum Commercial variant.
- Parcel D: Refer to the discussion of the Maximum Commercial variant.
- Parcel E: The west and north facades of the building on Parcel E would be exposed to an L_{dn} of up to 71 dBA. According to the City's Noise Element, the limit for normally acceptable noise levels for new residential land use is an L_{dn} of 60 dBA. Since this noise exposure is greater than that considered normally acceptable for new residential land use, this is considered a significant impact.
- Greenway and Park: Refer to the discussion of the Maximum Commercial variant.

Base Case Variant.

- Parcel A: Noise impacts at this parcel would be the same as those identified for the parcel under the Maximum Commercial variant.
- Parcel B: Refer to the discussion of the Maximum Commercial variant.
- Parcel C: Refer to the discussion of the Maximum Commercial variant.
- Parcel D: Refer to the discussion of the Maximum Commercial variant.
- Parcel E: Refer to the discussion of the Maximum Commercial variant.
- Greenway and Park: Refer to the discussion of the Maximum Commercial variant.

Phase O (All Variants) Impact NOISE-2: Project uses would be exposed to noise levels greater than those considered normally acceptable. (S)

Buildings and uses on every parcel within the project site would be exposed to noise above acceptable levels. Implementation of the following mitigation measure would reduce this impact to a less-than-significant level:

Phase O (All Variants) Mitigation Measure NOISE-2: The project applicant shall prepare an acoustical study for all buildings within the project site that identifies the measures that will be employed to meet an interior L_{dn} of 45 dBA or less (except for commercial uses on Parcel E), in accordance with the State Noise Insulation Standards. These measures could include construction of a soundwall as part of this mitigation measure. These standards are applicable to new multi-family residential projects exposed to an L_{dn} greater than 60 dBA. Typically, the required measures include sound-rated windows, exterior doors and special exterior wall construction. The acoustical study shall be prepared during the architectural design phase of the project, and all recommendations of the study shall be incorporated into the project.

The acoustical study that is prepared for commercial development at Parcel E shall specify an appropriate interior noise level standard that is appropriate for anticipated commercial uses.

The train noise at the Greenway and park shall be reduced to the normally acceptable level of L_{dn} 70 dBA by installing a solid barrier along the entire length of the property line with the railroad corridor. The barrier can be a solid wall or an earthen berm. The barrier shall be tall enough to block the line of sight to the trains on the through tracks located near the centerline of the corridor. Preliminary calculations indicate that a wall height of 9 to 12 feet would be sufficient, but the final height will depend on the proposed grading of the site and the location of the barrier. Alternatively, barriers shall be built locally around areas of frequent use within the park while those areas subject to transient foot traffic, such as the greenway, could remain unprotected. (LTS)

If implemented, the noise barrier would also reduce noise at the buildings on parcels C and E which are east of the Greenway and park. However, only the first floor of the buildings would benefit from the noise barrier since the upper levels would tend to look over the barrier and have a direct line-of-sight to the railroad trains. The noise reduction at the first floor would be about 5 dBA.

City Zoning Ordinance Standards for Noise and Vibration. Proposed land uses do not include industrial manufacturing or fabrication uses that would be expected to generate excessive noise and vibration. Common roof-top ventilation and refrigeration equipment associated with offices and retail uses could generate noise levels that exceed the City's Zoning Ordinance Noise Standards particularly when they are located close to residential uses. This is considered a potentially significant impact.

Phase O (All Variants) Impact NOISE-3: New commercial uses could have mechanical equipment that exceeds the City's Zoning Ordinance Noise Standards. (S)

Implementation of the following mitigation measures would reduce this impact to a less-than-significant level:

Phase O (All Variants) Mitigation Measure NOISE-3: Acoustical studies shall be prepared that identify the expected noise levels from mechanical equipment at the property lines of adjacent noise sensitive land uses. Recommendations shall be made and needed features included in the design to meet the City's Zoning Ordinance Noise Standards. (LTS)

Federal Transit Administration (FTA) Guidelines for Rail Vibration. Vibration levels inside proposed buildings would depend on the vibration levels in the ground and building construction. Based on the methodology for a "general vibration assessment" in the FTA guidance manual, vibration levels inside buildings are typically less than the vibration levels in the ground. This is due to the losses associated with the coupling of the building's foundation to the ground. The general rule is that the heavier the building, the greater the coupling loss. Therefore, since the vibration levels measured at the site (Table IV.E-2) are less than the 72 VdB threshold, anticipated vibration levels inside the buildings would be expected to also be less than the threshold. Therefore, vibration within the project site is considered a less-than-significant impact.

It should be noted that vibration may still be perceptible in the closest buildings to the railroad tracks, which should be disclosed to potential residents. Also, some structural designs can cause amplification of vibration levels in floors. This is particularly true for wood frame buildings. Therefore, reasonable efforts should be made during the structural design of the buildings closest to the tracks to minimize this amplification. However, these impacts are not considered significant.

Increase in Noise. Traffic generated by proposed uses would increase noise levels at existing land uses along roadways near the project site. Existing and future traffic noise levels were calculated using the Federal Highway Administration's Highway Traffic Noise Prediction Model (FHWA-RD-77-108). This model calculates noise levels based on the traffic volume, truck mix, speed and distance from the roadway. The traffic noise levels are shown in Table IV.E-10.

The traffic volumes used in the analysis are based on the turning movements developed for the environmental analysis in this Draft EIR. Existing truck percentages, with the exception of Park Avenue, are based on the data provided by Caltrans for San Pablo Avenue (State Route 123). On Park Avenue, roadway truck counts made during the short-term noise measurements were used to determine existing and future truck percentages. It was assumed that truck percentages would likely decrease in the future as land uses in Emeryville continue to shift from predominantly industrial to a mix of industrial with commercial and residential uses. Therefore, the future truck percentage was derived by assuming that the existing volume of trucks would remain but would not increase linearly with the projected traffic growth. Instead, new traffic was assumed to have a lower percentage of trucks (i.e. the same percentage as found on San Pablo Avenue).

On most analyzed roadways, project-related traffic would not result in noise increase of more than 3 dBA (therefore, traffic associated with the proposed project would not result in significant noise impacts at these roadways). Some areas would experience a reduction in noise due to the absence of the Sherwin-Williams plant and associated trucks. For example, residential uses on Sherwin Avenue, opposite the shipping dock, would experience a noticeable decrease in noise from trucks and other machinery. The reduction in trucks along Halleck and Hubbard Streets would also tend to reduce noise levels at adjacent land uses. Projected noise increases greater than 3 dBA would only occur along Horton Street and 45th Street.

- **Horton Street:** Between Park Avenue and 40th Street, land uses along Horton Street would be exposed to a traffic noise increase of 3.2 dBA under the Maximum Commercial variant and less than 3dBA under the Maximum Residential variant. According to the City's Noise Element, the adjacent land uses, which are light-industrial, have a maximum normally acceptable noise level of L_{dn} 70 dBA. The future traffic noise level at these uses is not expected to exceed this level. Therefore, the threshold for a significant traffic noise increase is 5 dBA. Since the projected traffic noise increase does not exceed this level, the Maximum Commercial variant (and other operational variants) would not result in a significant noise impact along Horton Street.
- **45th Street:** The increase in traffic noise levels shown in Table IV.E-9 along 45th Street between Horton and Holden Streets is 5.3 dBA as a result of the Base Case scenario. Although the table is referenced to a distance of 50 feet, this same increase in noise levels would be experienced by the residential uses on either side of 45th Street (45th Street Artists Coop and Horton Lofts), which are about 30 feet from the roadway centerline. The noise increase threshold is 3 dBA at these buildings because the future traffic noise levels at the facades is greater than the normally

Table IV.E-10: Existing Plus Project Traffic Noise Levels

Roadway	Segment	Existing	Existing Plus Project		Existing Plus Maximum Commercial		Existing Plus Maximum Residential	
		L _{dn} at 50 ft, dBA	L _{dn} at 50 ft, dBA	Increase dBA	L _{dn} at 50 ft, dBA	Increase dBA	L _{dn} at 50 ft, dBA	Increase dBA
Horton Street	north of 53rd Street	61	63	2.0	63	1.9	63	1.5
	53rd Street to 45th Street	61	64	2.2	64	2.1	63	1.7
	45th Street to Park Avenue	61	63	2.0	63	2.0	63	1.6
	Park Avenue to 40th Street	61	64	3.2	64	3.2	64	2.5
	40th Street to Mandela Pkwy	64	65	1.4	65	1.5	65	1.0
	north of 45th Street	64	64	0.0	64	0.0	64	0.0
Hollis Street	45th Street to Park Avenue	64	64	0.0	64	0.0	64	0.0
	Park Avenue to 40th Street	64	64	0.1	64	0.1	64	0.1
	south of 40th Street	64	65	0.1	65	0.1	65	0.1
San Pablo Avenue	north of 45th Street	69	69	0.2	69	0.1	69	0.2
	south of 45th Street	70	70	0.0	70	0.0	70	0.0
53rd St.	east of Horton Street	50	51	0.9	51	0.7	51	0.6
45th Street	Horton Street to Holden Street	53	58	5.3	58	5.2	58	4.4
	Holden Street to Hollis Street	55	59	4.0	59	3.9	58	3.3
	east of Hollis Street	59	61	2.2	61	2.1	60	1.7
Park Avenue	west of Horton Street	63	64	1.1	65	1.3	64	1.0
	Horton Street to Hollis Street	64	64	0.3	64	0.5	64	0.4
40th Street	west of Horton Street	67	67	0.1	67	0.1	67	0.1
	Horton Street to Hollis Street	67	67	0.4	67	0.4	67	0.3
	east of Hollis Street	67	68	0.3	68	0.4	68	0.3

Source: Rosen, Goldberg and Der, 2005.

[Add Base Case numbers]

acceptable L_{dn} of 60 dBA. Since the projected increase is greater than 3 dBA this is considered a significant noise impact.

Phase O (All Variants) Impact NOISE-4: Traffic generated by the proposed project would result in significant noise level increases along 45th Street. (S)

A common method for reducing traffic noise is to install a noise barrier that blocks the line of sight between the traffic and the receiver. Construction of a noise barrier is not feasible along 45th Street due to space limitations. Another approach would be to improve the noise insulation of the building facades to offset the projected traffic noise increase. Since the exterior walls of these building is primarily brick it is likely that upgrading the existing windows with new, sound-rated windows, would provide a significant improvement in outdoor noise reduction and offset the projected increase. However, the implementation of new windows as a mitigation measure would require that the windows remain closed at all times to effectively mitigate the noise increase.

[City/Applicant: A third option could be to restrict traffic along 45th Street by blocking off 45th Street at Horton. This would need further investigation but may cause impacts on Horton St.]

Implementation of the following mitigation measure would reduce this impact, but not to a less-than-significant level. Therefore, the impact would remain significant and unavoidable.

Phase O (All Variants) Mitigation Measure NOISE-4: A unit-by-unit acoustical study of buildings along 45th Street that would be exposed to noise increases of more than 3 dBA as a result of the proposed project shall be performed to identify appropriate exterior window/wall modifications. These could include replacing the windows with new sound-rated windows or adding secondary glazing to the existing window openings. The window upgrades (if determined to be appropriate) shall be installed prior to project operation. However, for window upgrades to be effective, windows would need to be closed at all times. Requiring windows in existing buildings to be closed at all times would be infeasible. Implementation of this mitigation measure would help reduce noise levels but the impact would remain significant and unavoidable. (SU)

3. Adverse Health Effects Of Noise

3.1. Introduction

The perception of sounds in day-to-day life is of major importance for human well-being. Communication through speech, sounds from playing children, music, natural sounds in parklands, parks and gardens are all examples of sounds essential for satisfaction in every day life. Conversely, this document is related to the adverse effects of sound (noise). According to the International Programme on Chemical Safety (WHO 1994), an adverse effect of noise is defined as a change in the morphology and physiology of an organism that results in impairment of functional capacity, or an impairment of capacity to compensate for additional stress, or increases the susceptibility of an organism to the harmful effects of other environmental influences. This definition includes any temporary or long-term lowering of the physical, psychological or social functioning of humans or human organs. The health significance of noise pollution is given in this chapter under separate headings, according to the specific effects: noise-induced hearing impairment; interference with speech communication; disturbance of rest and sleep; psychophysiological, mental-health and performance effects; effects on residential behaviour and annoyance; as well as interference with intended activities. This chapter also considers vulnerable groups and the combined effects of sounds from different sources. Conclusions based on the details given in this chapter are given in Chapter 4 as they relate to guideline values.

3.2. Noise-Induced Hearing Impairment

Hearing impairment is typically defined as an increase in the threshold of hearing. It is assessed by threshold audiometry. Hearing handicap is the disadvantage imposed by hearing impairment sufficient to affect one's personal efficiency in the activities of daily living. It is usually expressed in terms of understanding conventional speech in common levels of background noise (ISO 1990). Worldwide, noise-induced hearing impairment is the most prevalent irreversible occupational hazard. In the developing countries, not only occupational noise, but also environmental noise is an increasing risk factor for hearing impairment. In 1995, at the World Health Assembly, it was estimated that there are 120 million persons with disabling hearing difficulties worldwide (Smith 1998). It has been shown that men and women are equally at risk of noise-induced hearing impairment (ISO 1990; Berglund & Lindvall 1995).

Apart from noise-induced hearing impairment, hearing damage in populations is also caused by certain diseases; some industrial chemicals; ototoxic drugs; blows to the head; accidents; and hereditary origins. Deterioration of hearing capability is also associated with the aging process *per se* (presbycusis). Present knowledge of the physiological effects of noise on the auditory system is based primarily on laboratory studies on animals. After noise exposure, the first morphological changes are usually found in the inner and outer hair cells of the cochlea, where the stereocilia become fused and bent. After more prolonged exposure, the outer and inner hair cells related to transmission of high-frequency sounds are missing. See Berglund & Lindvall (1995) for further discussion.

The ISO Standard 1999 (ISO 1990) gives a method for calculating noise-induced hearing

impairment in populations exposed to all types of noise (continuous, intermittent, impulse) during working hours. Noise exposure is characterized by LAeq over 8 hours (LAeq,8h). In the Standard, the relationships between LAeq,8h and noise-induced hearing impairment are given for frequencies of 500–6 000 Hz, and for exposure times of up to 40 years. These relations show that noise-induced hearing impairment occurs predominantly in the high-frequency range of 3 000–6 000 Hz, the effect being largest at 4 000 Hz. With increasing LAeq,8h and increasing exposure time, noise-induced hearing impairment also occurs at 2 000 Hz. But at LAeq,8h levels of 75 dBA and lower, even prolonged occupational noise exposure will not result in noise-induced hearing impairment (ISO 1990). This value is equal to that specified in 1980 by the World Health Organization (WHO 1980a).

The ISO Standard 1999 (ISO 1990) specifies hearing impairment in statistical terms (median values, and percentile fractions between 0.05 and 0.95). The extent of noise-induced hearing impairment in populations exposed to occupational noise depends on the value of LAeq,8h and the number of years of noise exposure. However, for high LAeq,8h values, individual susceptibility seems to have a considerable effect on the rate of progression of hearing impairment. For daily exposures of 8–16 h, noise-induced hearing impairment can be reasonably well estimated from LAeq,8h extrapolated to the longer exposure times (Axelsson et al. 1986). In this adaptation of LAeq,8h for daily exposures other than 8 hours, the equal energy principle is assumed to be applicable. For example, the hearing impairment due to a 16 h daily exposure is equivalent to that at LAeq,8h plus 3 dB ($LA_{eq,16h} = LA_{eq,8h} + 10 \cdot \log_{10} (16/8) = LA_{eq,8h} + 3$ dB). For a 24 h exposure, $LA_{eq,24h} = LA_{eq,8h} + 10 \cdot \log_{10} (24/8) = LA_{eq,8h} + 5$ dB).

Since the calculation method specified in the ISO Standard 1999 (ISO 1990) is the only universally adopted method for estimating occupational noise-induced hearing impairment, attempts have been made to assess whether the method is also applicable to hearing impairment due to environmental noise, including leisure-time noise. There is ample evidence that shooting noise, with LAeq,24h values of up to 80 dB, induces the same hearing impairment as an equivalent occupational noise exposure (Smoorenburg 1998). Moreover, noise-induced hearing impairment studies from motorbikes are also in agreement with results from ISO Standard 1999 (ISO 1990). Hearing impairment in young adults and children 12 years and older has been assessed by LAeq on a 24 h time basis, for a variety of environmental and leisure-time exposure patterns (e.g. Passchier-Vermeer 1993; HCN 1994). These include pop music in discotheques and concerts (Babisch & Ising 1989; ISO 1990); pop music through headphones (Ising et al. 1994; Struwe et al. 1996; Passchier-Vermeer et al. 1998); music played by brass bands and symphony orchestras (van Hees 1992). The results are in agreement with values predicted by the ISO Standard 1999 method on the basis of adjusted time.

In the publications cited above, exposure to noise with known characteristics, such as duration and level, was related to hearing impairment. In addition to these publications, there is also an extensive literature showing hearing impairment in populations exposed to specific types of non-occupational noise, although these exposures are not well characterized. These noises originate from shooting, motorcycling, snowmobile driving, playing in arcades, listening to music at concerts and through headphones, using noisy toys, and fireworks (e.g. Brookhouser et al. 1992; see also Berglund & Lindvall 1995). Although the characteristics of these exposures are to a certain extent unknown, the details in the publications suggest that LAeq,24h values of these

exposures exceed 70 dB.

In contrast, epidemiological studies failed to show hearing damage in populations exposed to an LAeq,24h of less than 70 dB (Lindemann et al. 1987). The data imply that even a lifetime exposure to environmental and leisure-time noise with an LAeq,24h <70 dBA would not cause hearing impairment in the large majority of people (over 95%). Overall, the results of many studies strongly suggest that the method from ISO Standard 1999 can also be used to estimate hearing impairment due to environmental and leisure-time noise, in addition to estimating the effects of occupational noise exposure.

Although the evidence suggests that the calculation method from ISO Standard 1999 (ISO 1990) should also be accepted for environmental and leisure time noise exposures, large-scale epidemiological studies of the general population do not exist to support this proposition. Taking into account the limitations of the studies, care should be taken with respect to the following aspects:

- a. Data from animal experiments indicate that children may be more vulnerable in acquiring noise-induced hearing impairment than adults.
- b. At very high instantaneous sound pressure levels, mechanical damage to the ear may occur (Hanner & Axelsson 1988). Occupational limits are set at peak sound pressure levels of 140 dB (EU 1986a). For adults exposed to environmental and leisure-time noise, this same limit is assumed to be valid. In the case of children, however, taking into account their habits while playing with noisy toys, peak sound pressure levels should never exceed 120 dB.
- c. For shooting noise with LAeq,24h over 80 dB, studies on temporary threshold shift suggest the possibility of an increased risk for noise-induced hearing impairment (Smootenburg 1998).
- d. Risk for noise-induced hearing impairment may increase when the noise exposure is combined with exposure to vibrations, the use of ototoxic drugs, or some chemicals (Fechter 1999). In these circumstances, long-term exposure to LAeq,24h of 70 dBA may induce small hearing impairments.
- e. It is uncertain whether the relationships between hearing impairment and noise exposure given in ISO Standard 1999 (ISO 1990) are applicable for environmental sounds of short rise time. For example, in the case of military low-altitude flying areas (75–300 m above ground) L_{Amax} values of 110–130 dB occur within seconds after the onset of the sound.

Usually noise-induced hearing impairment is accompanied by an abnormal loudness perception which is known as loudness recruitment (*cf.* Berglund & Lindvall 1995). With a considerable loss of auditory sensitivity, some sounds may be perceived as distorted (paracusis). Another sensory effect that results from noise exposure is tinnitus (ringing in the ears). Commonly, tinnitus is referred to as sounds that are emitted by the inner ear itself (physiological tinnitus).

Tinnitus is a common and often disturbing accompaniment of occupational hearing impairment (Vernon and Moller 1995) and has become a risk for teenagers attending pop concerts and discotheques (Hetu & Fortin 1995; Passchier-Vermeer et al. 1998; Axelsson & Prasher 1999). Noise-induced tinnitus may be temporary, lasting up to 24 hours after exposure, or may have a more permanent character, such as after prolonged occupational noise exposure. Sometimes tinnitus is due to the sound produced by the blood flow through structures in the ear.

The main social consequence of hearing impairment is an inability to understand speech in daily living conditions, which is considered a severe social handicap. Even small values of hearing impairment (10 dB averaged over 2 000 and 4 000 Hz, and over both ears) may have an effect on the understanding of speech. When the hearing impairment exceeds 30 dB (again averaged over 2 000 and 4 000 Hz and both ears) a social hearing handicap is noticeable (*cf.* Katz 1994; Berglund & Lindvall 1995).

In the past, hearing protection has mainly emphasized occupational noise exposures at high values of LAeq,8h, or situations with high impulsive sounds. The near-universal adoption of an LAeq,8h value of 85 dB (or lower) as the limit for unprotected occupational noise exposure, together with requirements for personal hearing protection, has made cases of severe unprotected exposures more rare. This is particularly true for developed countries. However, monitoring of compliance and enforcement action for sound pressure levels just over the limits may be weak, especially in non-industrial environments in developed countries (Franks 1998), as well as in occupational and urban environments in developing countries (Smith 1998). Nevertheless, regulations for occupational noise exposure exist almost worldwide and exposures to occupational noise are to a certain extent under control.

On the other hand, environmental noise exposures due to a number of noisy activities, especially those during leisure-time activities of children and young adults, have scarcely been regulated. Given both the increasing number of noisy activities and the increasing exposure duration, such as loud music in cars and the use of Walkmen and Discmen, regulatory activities in this field are to be encouraged. Dose-response data are lacking for the general population. However, judging from the limited data for study groups (teenagers, young adults and women), and the assumption that time of exposure can be equated with sound energy, the risk for hearing impairment would be negligible for LAeq,24h values of 70 dBA over a lifetime. To avoid hearing impairment, impulse noise exposures should never exceed 140 dB peak sound pressure in adults, and 120 dB peak sound pressure in children.

3.3. Interference with Speech Communication

Noise interference with speech comprehension results in a large number of personal disabilities, handicaps and behavioural changes. Problems with concentration, fatigue, uncertainty and lack of self-confidence, irritation, misunderstandings, decreased working capacity, problems in human relations, and a number of stress reactions have all been identified (Lazarus 1998). Particularly vulnerable to these types of effects are the hearing impaired, the elderly, children in the process of language and reading acquisition, and individuals who are not familiar with the spoken language (e.g., Lazarus 1998). Thus, vulnerable persons constitute a substantial proportion of a country's population.

Most of the acoustical energy of speech is in the frequency range 100–6 000 Hz, with the most important cue-bearing energy being between 300–3 000 Hz. Speech interference is basically a masking process in which simultaneous, interfering noise renders speech incapable of being understood. The higher the level of the masking noise, and the more energy it contains at the most important speech frequencies, the greater will be the percentage of speech sounds that become indiscernible to the listener. Environmental noise may also mask many other acoustical signals important for daily life, such as door bells, telephone signals, alarm clocks, fire alarms and other warning signals, and music (e.g., Edworthy & Adams 1996). The masking effect of interfering noise in speech discrimination is more pronounced for hearing-impaired persons than for persons with normal hearing, particularly if the interfering noise is composed of speech or babble.

As the sound pressure level of an interfering noise increases, people automatically raise their voice to overcome the masking effect upon speech (increase of vocal effort). This imposes an additional strain on the speaker. For example, in quiet surroundings, the speech level at 1 m distance averages 45–50 dBA, but is 30 dBA higher when shouting. However, even if the interfering noise is moderately loud, most of the sentences during ordinary conversation can still be understood fairly well. Nevertheless, the interpretation required for compensating the masking effect of the interfering sounds, and for comprehending what was said, imposes an additional strain on the listener. One contributing factor could be that speech spoken loudly is more difficult to understand than speech spoken softly, when compared at a constant speech-to-noise ratio (*cf.* Berglund & Lindvall 1995).

Speech levels vary between individuals because of factors such as gender and vocal effort. Moreover, outdoor speech levels decrease by about 6 dB for a doubling in the distance between talker and listener. Speech intelligibility in everyday living conditions is influenced by speech level, speech pronunciation, talker-to-listener distance, sound pressure levels, and to some extent other characteristics of interfering noise, as well as room characteristics (e.g. reverberation). Individual capabilities of the listener, such as hearing acuity and the level of attention of the listener, are also important for the intelligibility of speech. Speech communication is affected also by the reverberation characteristics of the room. For example, reverberation times greater than 1 s produce loss in speech discrimination. Longer reverberation times, especially when combined with high background interfering noise, make speech perception more difficult. Even in a quiet environment, a reverberation time below 0.6 s is desirable for adequate speech intelligibility by vulnerable groups. For example, for older hearing-handicapped persons, the optimal reverberation time for speech intelligibility is 0.3–0.5 s (Plomp 1986).

For complete sentence intelligibility in listeners with normal hearing, the signal-to-noise ratio (i.e. the difference between the speech level and the sound pressure level of the interfering noise) should be 15–18 dBA (Lazarus 1990). This implies that in smaller rooms, noise levels above 35 dBA interferes with the intelligibility of speech (Bradley 1985). Earlier recommendations suggested that sound pressure levels as high as 45 dBA would be acceptable (US EPA 1974). With raised voice (increased vocal effort) sentences may be 100% intelligible for noise levels of up to 55 dBA; and sentences spoken with straining vocal effort can be 100% intelligible with noise levels of about 65 dBA. For speech to be intelligible when listening to complicated

messages (at school, listening to foreign languages, telephone conversation), it is recommended that the signal-to-noise ratio should be at least 15 dBA. Thus, with a speech level of 50 dBA, (at 1 m distance this level corresponds to a casual speech level of both women and men), the sound pressure level of interfering noise should not exceed 35 dBA. For vulnerable groups even lower background levels are needed. If it is not possible to meet the strictest criteria for vulnerable persons in sensitive situations (e.g. in classrooms), one should strive for as low background levels as possible.

3.4. Sleep Disturbance

Uninterrupted sleep is known to be a prerequisite for good physiological and mental functioning of healthy persons (Hobson 1989); sleep disturbance, on the other hand, is considered to be a major environmental noise effect. It is estimated that 80-90% of the reported cases of sleep disturbance in noisy environments are for reasons other than noise originating outdoors. For example, sanitary needs; indoor noises from other occupants; worries; illness; and climate (e.g. Reyner & Horne 1995). Our understanding of the impact of noise exposure on sleep stems mainly from experimental research in controlled environments. Field studies conducted with people in their normal living situations are scarce. Most of the more recent field research on sleep disturbance has been conducted for aircraft noise (Fidell et al. 1994 1995a,b 1998; Horne et al. 1994 1995; Maschke et al. 1995 1996; Ollerhead et al. 1992; Passchier-Vermeer 1999). Other field studies have examined the effects of road traffic and railway noise (Griefahn et al. 1996 1998).

The primary sleep disturbance effects are: difficulty in falling asleep (increased sleep latency time); awakenings; and alterations of sleep stages or depth, especially a reduction in the proportion of REM-sleep (REM = rapid eye movement) (Hobson 1989). Other primary physiological effects can also be induced by noise during sleep, including increased blood pressure; increased heart rate; increased finger pulse amplitude; vasoconstriction; changes in respiration; cardiac arrhythmia; and an increase in body movements (cf. Berglund & Lindvall 1995). For each of these physiological effects, both the noise threshold and the noise-response relationships may be different. Different noises may also have different information content and this also could affect physiological threshold and noise-response relationships (Edworthy 1998).

Exposure to night-time noise also induces secondary effects, or so-called after effects. These are effects that can be measured the day following the night-time exposure, while the individual is awake. The secondary effects include reduced perceived sleep quality; increased fatigue; depressed mood or well-being; and decreased performance (Öhrström 1993a; Passchier-Vermeer 1993; Carter 1996; Pearsons et al. 1995; Pearsons 1998).

Long-term effects on psychosocial well-being have also been related to noise exposure during the night (Öhrström 1991). Noise annoyance during the night-time increased the total noise annoyance expressed by people in the following 24 h. Various studies have also shown that people living in areas exposed to night-time noise have an increased use of sedatives or sleeping pills. Other frequently reported behavioural effects of night-time noise include closed bedroom windows and use of personal hearing protection. Sensitive groups include the elderly, shift workers, persons especially vulnerable to physical or mental disorders and other individuals with

sleeping difficulties.

Questionnaire data indicate the importance of night-time noise on the perception of sleep quality. A recent Japanese investigation was conducted for 3 600 women (20–80 years old) living in eight roadside zones with different road traffic noise. The results showed that four measures of perceived sleep quality (difficulty in falling asleep; waking up during sleep; waking up too early; feelings of sleeplessness one or more days a week) correlated significantly with the average traffic volumes during night-time. An in-depth investigation of 19 insomnia cases and their matched controls (age, work) measured outdoor and indoor sound pressure levels during sleep (Kageyama et al. 1997). The study showed that road traffic noise in excess of 30 dB LAeq for nighttime induced sleep disturbance, consistent with the results of Öhrström (1993b).

Meta-analyses of field and laboratory studies have suggested that there is a relationship between the SEL for a single night-time noise event and the percentage of people awakened, or who showed sleep stage changes (e.g. Ollerhead et al. 1992; Passchier-Vermeer 1993; Finegold et al. 1994; Pearsons et al. 1995). All of these studies assumed that the number of awakenings per night for each SEL value is proportional to the number of night-time noise events. However, the results have been criticized for methodological reasons. For example, there were small groups of sleepers; too few original studies; and indoor exposure was estimated from outdoor sound pressure levels (NRC-CNRC 1994; Beersma & Altena 1995; Vallet 1998). The most important result of the meta-analyses is that there is a clear difference in the dose-response curves for laboratory and field studies, and that noise has a lower effect under real-life conditions (Pearsons et al. 1995; Pearsons 1998).

However, this result has been questioned, because the studies were not controlled for such things as the sound insulation of the buildings, and the number of bedrooms with closed windows. Also, only two indicators of sleep disturbance were considered (awakening and sleep stage changes). The meta-analyses thus neglected other important sleep disturbance effects (Öhrström 1993b; Carter et al. 1994a; Carter et al. 1994b; Carter 1996; Kuwano et al. 1998). For example, for road traffic noise, perceived sleep quality is related both to the time needed to fall asleep and the total sleep time (Öhrström & Björkman 1988). Individuals who are more sensitive to noise (as assessed by different questionnaires) report worse sleep quality both in field studies and in laboratory studies.

A further criticism of the meta-analyses is that laboratory experiments have shown that habituation to night-time noise events occurs, and that noise-induced awakening decreases with increasing number of sound exposures per night. This is in contrast to the assumption used in the meta-analyses, that the percentage of awakenings is linearly proportional to the number of night-time noise events. Studies have also shown that the frequency of noise-induced awakenings decreases for at least the first eight consecutive nights. So far, habituation has been shown for awakenings, but not for heart rate and after effects such as perceived sleep quality, mood and performance (Öhrström and Björkman 1988).

Other studies suggest that it is the difference in sound pressure levels between a noise event and background, rather than the absolute sound pressure level of the noise event, that determines the reaction probability. The time interval between two noise events also has an important influence

of the probability of obtaining a response (Griefahn 1977; *cf.* Berglund & Lindvall 1995). Another possible factor is the person's age, with older persons having an increased probability of awakening. However, one field study showed that noise-induced awakenings are independent of age (Reyner & Horne 1995).

For a good sleep, it is believed that indoor sound pressure levels should not exceed approximately 45 dB LA_{max} more than 10–15 times per night (Vallet & Vernet 1991), and most studies show an increase in the percentage of awakenings at SEL values of 55–60 dBA (Passchier-Vermeer 1993; Finegold et al. 1994; Pearsons et al. 1995). For intermittent events that approximate aircraft noise, with an effective duration of 10–30 s, SEL values of 55–60 dBA correspond to a LA_{max} value of 45 dB. Ten to 15 of these events during an eight-hour night-time implies an LA_{eq,8h} of 20–25 dB. This is 5–10 dB below the LA_{eq,8h} of 30 dB for continuous night-time noise exposure, and shows that the intermittent character of noise has to be taken into account when setting night-time limits for noise exposure. For example, this can be achieved by considering the number of noise events and the difference between the maximum sound pressure level and the background level of these events.

Special attention should also be given to the following considerations:

- a. Noise sources in an environment with a low background noise level. For example, night-traffic in suburban residential areas.
- b. Environments where a combination of noise and vibrations are produced. For example, railway noise, heavy duty vehicles.
- c. Sources with low-frequency components. Disturbances may occur even though the sound pressure level during exposure is below 30 dBA.

If negative effects on sleep are to be avoided the equivalent sound pressure level should not exceed 30 dBA indoors for continuous noise. If the noise is not continuous, sleep disturbance correlates best with LA_{max} and effects have been observed at 45 dB or less. This is particularly true if the background level is low. Noise events exceeding 45 dBA should therefore be limited if possible. For sensitive people an even lower limit would be preferred. It should be noted that it should be possible to sleep with a bedroom window slightly open (a reduction from outside to inside of 15 dB). To prevent sleep disturbances, one should thus consider the equivalent sound pressure level and the number and level of sound events. Mitigation targeted to the first part of the night is believed to be effective for the ability to fall asleep.

3.5. Cardiovascular and Physiological Effects

Epidemiological and laboratory studies involving workers exposed to occupational noise, and general populations (including children) living in noisy areas around airports, industries and noisy streets, indicate that noise may have both temporary and permanent impacts on physiological functions in humans. It has been postulated that noise acts as an environmental stressor (for a review see Passchier-Vermeer 1993; Berglund & Lindvall 1995). Acute noise exposures activate the autonomic and hormonal systems, leading to temporary changes such as increased blood pressure, increased heart rate and vasoconstriction. After prolonged exposure, susceptible individuals in the general population may develop permanent effects, such as hypertension and ischaemic heart disease associated with exposures to high sound pressure levels (for a review see Passchier-Vermeer 1993; Berglund & Lindvall 1995). The magnitude and duration of the effects are determined in part by individual characteristics, lifestyle behaviours and environmental conditions. Sounds also evoke reflex responses, particularly when they are unfamiliar and have a sudden onset.

Laboratory experiments and field quasi-experiments show that if noise exposure is temporary, the physiological system usually returns - after the exposure terminates - to a normal (pre-exposure) state within a time in the range of the exposure duration. If the exposure is of sufficient intensity and unpredictability, cardiovascular and hormonal responses may appear, including increases in heart rate and peripheral vascular resistance; changes in blood pressure, blood viscosity and blood lipids; and shifts in electrolyte balance (Mg/Ca) and hormonal levels (epinephrine, norepinephrine, cortisol). The first four effects are of interest because of noise-related coronary heart disease (Ising & Günther 1997). Laboratory and clinical data suggest that noise may significantly elevate gastrointestinal motility in humans.

By far the greatest number of occupational and community noise studies have focused on the possibility that noise may be a risk factor for cardiovascular disease. Many studies in occupational settings have indicated that workers exposed to high levels of industrial noise for 5–30 years have increased blood pressure and statistically significant increases in risk for hypertension, compared to workers in control areas (Passchier-Vermeer 1993). In contrast, only a few studies on environmental noise have shown that populations living in noisy areas around airports and on noisy streets have an increased risk for hypertension. The overall evidence suggests a weak association between long-term environmental noise exposure and hypertension (HCN 1994; Berglund & Lindvall 1995; IEH 1997), and no dose-response relationships could be established.

Recently, an updated summary of available studies for ischaemic heart disease has been presented (Babisch 1998a; Babisch 1998b; Babisch et al. 1999; see also Thompson 1996). The studies reviewed include case-control and cross-sectional designs, as well as three longitudinal studies. However, it has not yet been possible to conduct the most advanced quantitative integrated analysis of the available studies. Relative risks and their confidence intervals could be estimated only for the classes of high noise levels (mostly >65 dBA during daytime) and low levels (mostly <55 dBA during daytime), rather than a range of exposure levels. For methodological reasons identified in the meta-analysis, a cautious interpretation of the results is warranted (Lercher et al. 1998).

Prospective studies that controlled for confounding factors suggest an increase in ischaemic heart disease when the noise levels exceed 65–70 dB for LAeq (6–22). (For road traffic noise, the difference between LAeq (6–22h) and LAeq,24h usually is of the order of 1.5 dB). When orientation of the bedroom, window opening habits and years of exposure are taken into account, the risk of heart disease is slightly higher (Babisch et al. 1998; Babisch et al. 1999). However, disposition, behavioural and environmental factors were not sufficiently accounted for in the analyses carried out to date. In epidemiological studies the lowest level at which traffic noise had an effect on ischaemic heart disease was 70 dB for LAeq,24h (HCN 1994).

The overall conclusion is that cardiovascular effects are associated with long-term exposure to LAeq,24h values in the range of 65–70 dB or more, for both air- and road-traffic noise. However, the associations are weak and the effect is somewhat stronger for ischaemic heart disease than for hypertension. Nevertheless, such small risks are potentially important because a large number of persons are currently exposed to these noise levels, or are likely to be exposed in the future. Furthermore, only the average risk is considered and sensitive subgroups of the populations have not been sufficiently characterized. For example, a 10% increase in risk factors (a relative risk of 1.1) may imply an increase of up to 200 cases per 100 000 people at risk per year. Other observed psychophysiological effects, such as changes in stress hormones, magnesium levels, immunological indicators, and gastrointestinal disturbances are too inconsistent for conclusions to be drawn about the influence of noise pollution.

3.6. Mental Health Effects

Mental health is defined as the absence of identifiable psychiatric disorders according to current norms (Freeman 1984). Environmental noise is not believed to be a direct cause of mental illness, but it is assumed that it accelerates and intensifies the development of latent mental disorder. Studies on the adverse effects of environmental noise on mental health cover a variety of symptoms, including anxiety; emotional stress; nervous complaints; nausea; headaches; instability; argumentativeness; sexual impotency; changes in mood; increase in social conflicts, as well as general psychiatric disorders such as neurosis, psychosis and hysteria. Large-scale population studies have suggested associations between noise exposure and a variety of mental health indicators, such as single rating of well-being; standard psychological symptom profiles; the intake of psychotropic drugs; and consumption of tranquilizers and sleeping pills. Early studies showed a weak association between exposure to aircraft noise and psychiatric hospital admissions in the general population surrounding an airport (see also Berglund & Lindvall 1995). However, the studies have been criticized because of problems in selecting variables and in response bias (Halpern 1995).

Exposure to high levels of occupational noise has been associated with development of neurosis and irritability; and exposure to high levels of environmental noise with deteriorated mental health (Stansfeld 1992). However, the findings on environmental noise and mental health effects are inconclusive (HCN 1994; Berglund & Lindvall 1995; IEH 1997). The only longitudinal study in this field (Stansfeld et al. 1996) showed an association between the initial level of road traffic noise and minor psychiatric disorders, although the association for increased anxiety was weak and non-linear. It turned out that psychiatric disorders are associated with noise sensitivity,

rather than with noise exposure, and the association was found to disappear after adjustment for baseline trait anxiety. These and other results show the importance of taking vulnerable groups into account, because they may not be able to cope sufficiently with unwanted environmental noise (e.g. Stansfeld 1992). This is particularly true of children, the elderly and people with preexisting illnesses, especially depression (IEH 1997). Despite the weaknesses of the various studies, the possibility that community noise has adverse effects on mental health is suggested by studies on the use of medical drugs, such as tranquilizers and sleeping pills, on psychiatric symptoms and on mental hospital admission rates.

3.7. The Effects of Noise on Performance

It has been documented in both laboratory subjects and in workers exposed to occupational noise, that noise adversely affects cognitive task performance. In children, too, environmental noise impairs a number of cognitive and motivational parameters (Cohen et al. 1980; Evans & Lepore 1993; Evans 1998; Hygge et al. 1998; Haines et al. 1998). However, there are no published studies on whether environmental noise at home also impairs cognitive performance in adults. Accidents may also be an indicator of performance deficits. The few field studies on the effects of noise on performance and safety showed that noise may produce some task impairment and increase the number of errors in work, but the effects depend on the type of noise and the task being performed (Smith 1990).

Laboratory and workplace studies showed that noise can act as a distracting stimulus. Also, impulsive noise events (e.g. sonic booms) may produce disruptive effects as a result of startle responses. In the short term, noise-induced arousal may produce better performance of simple tasks, but cognitive performance deteriorates substantially for more complex tasks (i.e. tasks that require sustained attention to details or to multiple cues; or tasks that demand a large capacity of working memory, such as complex analytical processes). Some of the effects are related to loss in auditory comprehension and language acquisition, but others are not (Evans & Maxwell 1997). Among the cognitive effects, reading, attention, problem solving and memory are most strongly affected by noise. The observed effects on motivation, as measured by persistence with a difficult cognitive task, may either be independent or secondary to the aforementioned cognitive impairments.

Two types of memory deficits have been identified under experimental noise exposure: incidental memory and memory for materials that the observer was not explicitly instructed to focus on during a learning phase. For example, when presenting semantic information to subjects in the presence of noise, recall of the information content was unaffected, but the subjects were significantly less able to recall, for example, in which corner of the slide a word had been located. There is also some evidence that the lack of “helping behavior” that was noted under experimental noise exposure may be related to inattention to incidental cues (Berglund & Lindvall 1995). Subjects appear to process information faster in working memory during noisy performance conditions, but at a cost of available memory capacity. For example, in a running memory task, in which subjects were required to recall in sequence letters that they had just heard, subjects recalled recent items better under noisy conditions, but made more errors farther back into the list.

Experimental noise exposure consistently produces negative after-effects on performance (Glass & Singer 1972). Following exposure to aircraft noise, schoolchildren in the vicinity of Los Angeles airport were found to be deficient in proofreading, and in persistence with challenging puzzles (Cohen et al. 1980). The uncontrollability of noise, rather than the intensity of the noise, appears to be the most critical variable. The only prospective study on noise-exposed schoolchildren, designed around the move of the Munich airport (Hygge et al. 1996; Evans et al. 1998), confirmed the results of laboratory and workplace studies in adults, as well the results of the Los Angeles airport study with children (Cohen et al. 1980). An important finding was that some of the adaptation strategies for dealing with aircraft noise, such as tuning out or ignoring the noise, and the effort necessary to maintain task performance, come at a price. There is heightened sympathetic arousal, as indicated by increased levels of stress hormone, and elevation of resting blood pressure (Evans et al. 1995; Evans et al. 1998). Notably, in the airport studies reported above, the adverse effects were larger in children with lower school achievement.

For aircraft noise, it has been shown that chronic exposure during early childhood appears to impair reading acquisition and reduces motivational capabilities. Of recent concern are concomitant psychophysiological changes (blood pressure and stress hormone levels). Evidence indicates that the longer the exposure, the greater the damage. It seems clear that daycare centers and schools should not be located near major sources of noise, such as highways, airports and industrial sites.

3.8. Effects of Noise on Residential Behaviour and Annoyance

Noise annoyance is a global phenomenon. A definition of annoyance is “a feeling of displeasure associated with any agent or condition, known or believed by an individual or group to adversely affect them” (Lindvall & Radford 1973; Koelega 1987). However, apart from “annoyance”, people may feel a variety of negative emotions when exposed to community noise, and may report anger, disappointment, dissatisfaction, withdrawal, helplessness, depression, anxiety, distraction, agitation, or exhaustion (Job 1993; Fields et al. 1997 1998). Thus, although the term annoyance does not cover all the negative reactions, it is used for convenience in this document.

Noise can produce a number of social and behavioural effects in residents, besides annoyance (for review see Berglund & Lindvall 1995). The social and behavioural effects are often complex, subtle and indirect. Many of the effects are assumed to be the result of interactions with a number of non-auditory variables. Social and behavioural effects include changes in overt everyday behaviour patterns (e.g. closing windows, not using balconies, turning TV and radio to louder levels, writing petitions, complaining to authorities); adverse changes in social behaviour (e.g. aggression, unfriendliness, disengagement, non-participation); adverse changes in social indicators (e.g. residential mobility, hospital admissions, drug consumption, accident rates); and changes in mood (e.g. less happy, more depressed).

Although changes in social behaviour, such as a reduction in helpfulness and increased aggressiveness, are associated with noise exposure, noise exposure alone is not believed to be sufficient to produce aggression. However, in combination with provocation or pre-existing anger or hostility, it may trigger aggression. It has also been suspected that people are less willing to help, both during exposure and for a period after exposure. Fairly consistent evidence

shows that noise above 80 dBA is associated with reduced helping behaviour and increased aggressive behaviour. Particularly, there is concern that high-level continuous noise exposures may contribute to the susceptibility of schoolchildren to feelings of helplessness (Evans & Lepore 1993)

The effects of community noise can be evaluated by assessing the extent of annoyance (low, moderate, high) among exposed individuals; or by assessing the disturbance of specific activities, such as reading, watching television and communication. The relationship between annoyance and activity disturbances is not necessarily direct and there are examples of situations where the extent of annoyance is low, despite a high level of activity disturbance. For aircraft noise, the most important effects are interference with rest, recreation and watching television. This is in contrast to road traffic noise, where sleep disturbance is the predominant effect (Berglund & Lindvall 1995).

A number of studies have shown that equal levels of traffic and industrial noises result in different magnitudes of annoyance (Hall et al. 1981; Griffiths 1983; Miedema 1993; Bradley 1994a; Miedema & Vos 1998). This has led to criticism (e.g. Kryter 1994; Bradley 1994a) of averaged dose-response curves determined by meta-analysis, which assumed that all traffic noises are the same (Fidell et al. 1991; Fields 1994a; Finegold et al. 1994). Schultz (1978) and Miedema & Vos (1998) have synthesized curves of annoyance associated with three types of traffic noise (road, air, railway). In these curves, the percentage of people highly or moderately annoyed was related to the day and night continuous equivalent sound level, L_{dn} . For each of the three types of traffic noise, the percentage of highly annoyed persons in a population started to increase at an L_{dn} value of 42 dBA, and the percentage of moderately annoyed persons at an L_{dn} value of 37 dBA (Miedema & Vos 1998). Aircraft noise produced a stronger annoyance response than road traffic, for the same L_{dn} exposure, consistent with earlier analyses (Kryter 1994; Bradley 1994a). However, caution should be exercised when interpreting synthesized data from different studies, since five major parameters should be randomly distributed for the analyses to be valid: personal, demographic, and lifestyle factors, as well as the duration of noise exposure and the population experience with noise (Kryter 1994).

Annoyance in populations exposed to environmental noise varies not only with the acoustical characteristics of the noise (source, exposure), but also with many non-acoustical factors of social, psychological, or economic nature (Fields 1993). These factors include fear associated with the noise source, conviction that the noise could be reduced by third parties, individual noise sensitivity, the degree to which an individual feels able to control the noise (coping strategies), and whether the noise originates from an important economic activity. Demographic variables such as age, sex and socioeconomic status, are less strongly associated with annoyance. The correlation between noise exposure and general annoyance is much higher at the group level than at the individual level, as might be expected. Data from 42 surveys showed that at the group level about 70% of the variance in annoyance is explained by noise exposure characteristics, whereas at the individual level it is typically about 20% (Job 1988).

When the type and amount of noise exposure is kept constant in the meta-analyses, differences between communities, regions and countries still exist (Fields 1990; Bradley 1996). This is well demonstrated by a comparison of the dose-response curve determined for road-traffic noise

(Miedema & Vos 1998) and that obtained in a survey along the North-South transportation route through the Austrian Alps (Lercher 1998b). The differences may be explained in terms of the influence of topography and meteorological factors on acoustical measures, as well as the low background noise level on the mountain slopes.

Stronger reactions have been observed when noise is accompanied by vibrations and contains low frequency components (Paulsen & Kastka 1995; Öhrström 1997; for review see Berglund et al. 1996), or when the noise contains impulses, such as shooting noise (Buchta 1996; Vos 1996; Smoorenburg 1998). Stronger, but temporary, reactions also occur when noise exposure is increased over time, in comparison to situations with constant noise exposure (e.g. HCN 1997; Klæboe et al. 1998). Conversely, for road traffic noise, the introduction of noise protection barriers in residential areas resulted in smaller reductions in annoyance than expected for a stationary situation (Kastka et al. 1995).

To obtain an indicator for annoyance, other methods of combining parameters of noise exposure have been extensively tested, in addition to metrics such as $L_{Aeq,24h}$ and L_{dn} . When used for a set of community noises, these indicators correlate well both among themselves and with $L_{Aeq,24h}$ or L_{dn} values (e.g. HCN 1997). Although $L_{Aeq,24h}$ and L_{dn} are in most cases acceptable approximations, there is a growing concern that all the component parameters of the noise should be individually assessed in noise exposure investigations, at least in the complex cases (Berglund & Lindvall 1995).

3.9. The Effects of Combined Noise Sources

Many acoustical environments consist of sounds from more than one source. For these environments, health effects are associated with the total noise exposure, rather than with the noise from a single source (WHO 1980b). When considering hearing impairment, for example, the total noise exposure can be expressed in terms of $L_{Aeq,24h}$ for the combined sources. For other adverse health effects, however, such a simple model most likely will not apply. It is possible that some disturbances (e.g. speech interference, sleep disturbance) may more easily be attributed to specific noises. In cases where one noise source clearly dominates, the magnitude of an effect may be assessed by taking into account the dominant source only (HCN 1997). Furthermore, at a policy level, there may be little need to identify the adverse effect of each specific noise, unless the responsibility for these effects is to be shared among several polluters (*cf.* The Polluter Pays Principle in Chapter 5, UNCED 1992).

There is no consensus on a model for assessing the total annoyance due to a combination of environmental noise sources. This is partly due to a lack of research into the temporal patterns of combined noises. The current approach for assessing the effects of “mixed noise sources” is limited to data on “total annoyance” transformed to mathematical principles or rules of thumb (Ronnebaum et al. 1996; Vos 1992; Miedema 1996; Berglund & Nilsson 1997). Models to assess the total annoyance of combinations of environmental noises may not be applicable to those health effects for which the mechanisms of noise interaction are unknown, and for which different cumulative or synergistic effects cannot be ruled out. When noise is combined with different types of environmental agents, such as vibrations, ototoxic chemicals, or chemical odours, again there is insufficient knowledge to accurately assess the combined effects on health

(Berglund & Lindvall 1995; HCN 1994; Miedema 1996; Zeichart 1998; Passchier-Vermeer & Zeichart 1998). Therefore, caution should be exercised when trying to predict the adverse health effects of combined factors in residential populations.

The evidence on low-frequency noise is sufficiently strong to warrant immediate concern. Various industrial sources emit continuous low-frequency noise (compressors, pumps, diesel engines, fans, public works); and large aircraft, heavy-duty vehicles and railway traffic produce intermittent low-frequency noise. Low-frequency noise may also produce vibrations and rattles as secondary effects. Health effects due to low-frequency components in noise are estimated to be more severe than for community noises in general (Berglund et al. 1996). Since A-weighting underestimates the sound pressure level of noise with low-frequency components, a better assessment of health effects would be to use C-weighting.

In residential populations heavy noise pollution will most certainly be associated with a combination of health effects. For example, cardiovascular disease, annoyance, speech interference at work and at home, and sleep disturbance. Therefore, it is important that the total adverse health load over 24 hours be considered and that the precautionary principle for sustainable development is applied in the management of health effects (see Chapter 5).

3.10. Vulnerable Groups

Protective standards are essentially derived from observations on the health effects of noise on “normal” or “average” populations. The participants of these investigations are selected from the general population and are usually adults. Sometimes, samples of participants are selected because of their easy availability. However, vulnerable groups of people are typically underrepresented. This group includes people with decreased personal abilities (old, ill, or depressed people); people with particular diseases or medical problems; people dealing with complex cognitive tasks, such as reading acquisition; people who are blind or who have hearing impairment; fetuses, babies and young children; and the elderly in general (Jansen 1987; AAP 1997). These people may be less able to cope with the impacts of noise exposure and be at greater risk for harmful effects.

Persons with impaired hearing are the most adversely affected with respect to speech intelligibility. Even slight hearing impairments in the high-frequency range may cause problems with speech perception in a noisy environment. From about 40 years of age, people typically demonstrate an impaired ability to understand difficult, spoken messages with low linguistic redundancy. Therefore, based on interference with speech perception, a majority of the population belongs to the vulnerable group.

Children have also been identified as vulnerable to noise exposure (see Agenda 21: UNCED 1992). The evidence on noise pollution and children’s health is strong enough to warrant monitoring programmes at schools and preschools to protect children from the effects of noise. Follow up programmes to study the main health effects of noise on children, including effects on speech perception and reading acquisition, are also warranted in heavily noise polluted areas (Cohen et al. 1986; Evans et al. 1998).

The issue of vulnerable subgroups in the general population should thus be considered when developing regulations or recommendations for the management of community noise. This consideration should take into account the types of effects (communication, recreation, annoyance, etc.), specific environments (*in utero*, incubator, home, school, workplace, public institutions, etc.) and specific lifestyles (listening to loud music through headphones, or at discotheques and festivals; motor cycling, etc.).