

APPENDIX 10.1
GLOSSARY OF ACOUSTIC TERMINOLOGY

Appendix 10.1: Glossary of Acoustic Terminology

AAWT-18h	Annual Average Week Day Traffic over the time period 0600-0000. Only includes Monday to Friday data.																		
Ambient sound	The totally encompassing sound in a given situation at a given time, usually composed of sound from all sources near and far.																		
Assessment period	The period in a day over which assessments are made.																		
A-weighting	A frequency weighting applied to measured or predicted sounds levels in order to compensate for the non-linearity of human hearing.																		
Background noise	Background noise is the term used to describe the noise measured in the absence of the noise under investigation. It is described as the average of the minimum noise levels measured on a sound level meter and is measured statistically as the A-weighted noise level exceeded for ninety percent of a sample period. This is represented as the L_{90} noise level (see below).																		
Background Sound Level dB $L_{A90,T}$	A-weighted sound pressure level that is exceeded by the residual sound at the assessment location for 90% of a given time interval, T, measured using time weighting F and quoted to the nearest whole number of decibels.																		
Broadband	Containing the full range of frequencies.																		
Decibel [dB]	<p>The level of noise is measured objectively using a Sound Level Meter. This instrument has been specifically developed to mimic the operation of the human ear. The human ear responds to minute pressure variations in the air. These pressure variations can be likened to the ripples on the surface of water but of course cannot be seen. The pressure variations in the air cause the eardrum to vibrate and this is heard as sound in the brain. The stronger the pressure variations, the louder the sound that is heard.</p> <p>The range of pressure variations associated with everyday living may span over a range of a million to one. On the top range may be the sound of a jet engine and on the bottom of the range may be the sound of a pin dropping.</p> <p>Instead of expressing pressure in units ranging from a million to one, it is found convenient to condense this range to a scale 0 to 120 and give it the units of decibels. The following are examples of the decibel readings of every day sounds:</p> <table border="0"> <tr> <td>Four engine jet aircraft at 100m</td> <td>120 dB</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Riveting of steel plate at 10m</td> <td>105 dB</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Pneumatic drill at 10m</td> <td>90 dB</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Circular wood saw at 10m</td> <td>80 dB</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Heavy road traffic at 10m</td> <td>75 dB</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Telephone bell at 10m</td> <td>65 dB</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Male speech, average at 10m</td> <td>50 dB</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Whisper at 10m</td> <td>25 dB</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Threshold of hearing, 1000 Hz</td> <td>0 dB</td> </tr> </table>	Four engine jet aircraft at 100m	120 dB	Riveting of steel plate at 10m	105 dB	Pneumatic drill at 10m	90 dB	Circular wood saw at 10m	80 dB	Heavy road traffic at 10m	75 dB	Telephone bell at 10m	65 dB	Male speech, average at 10m	50 dB	Whisper at 10m	25 dB	Threshold of hearing, 1000 Hz	0 dB
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$dB(A)$: A-weighted decibels	The ear is not as effective in hearing low frequency sounds as it is hearing high frequency sounds. That is, low frequency sounds of the same dB level are not heard as loud as high frequency sounds. The sound level meter replicates the human response of the ear by using an electronic filter which is called the 'A' filter. A sound level measured with this filter switched on is denoted as $dB(A)$. Practically all noise is measured using the A filter. The sound pressure level in $dB(A)$ gives a close indication of the subjective loudness of the noise.																		
Façade Noise Level	A noise level measured or predicted at the façade of a building, typically at a distance of 1m, containing a contribution made up of reflections from the façade itself (+3 dB).																		
Free Field Noise Level	A noise level measured or predicted which is unaffected by reflections, generally taken as being 3m from any reflecting surface excepting the ground.																		
L_{Amax} noise level	This is the maximum noise level recorded over the measurement period.																		
L_{Amin} noise level	This is the lowest level during the measurement period.																		
$L_{Aeq,T}$ noise level	This is the 'equivalent continuous A-weighted sound pressure level, in decibels' and is defined in British Standard 7445 as the 'value of the A-weighted sound pressure level of a continuous,																		

steady sound that, within a specified time interval, T, has the same mean square sound pressure as a sound under consideration whose level varies with time'.

It is a unit commonly used to describe construction noise, noise from industrial premises and is the most suitable unit for the description of other forms of environmental noise.

LA₉₀ noise level	This is the noise level that is exceeded for 90% of the measurement period and gives an indication of the noise level during quieter periods. It is often referred to as the background noise level and is used in the assessment of disturbance from industrial noise.
LA₁₀ noise level	This is the noise level which is achieved for 10% of the monitoring period and is often used to describe road traffic noise.
Rating Level, dB L_{A,r,Tr}	Specific sound level plus any adjustment for the characteristic features of the sound.
Residual Sound	Ambient sound remaining at the assessment location when the specific sound source is suppressed to such a degree that it does not contribute to the ambient sound source.
Sound Reduction Index (R)	The sound reduction index is a single-number rating of the sound reduction through a wall or other building element. Since the sound reduction may be different at different frequencies, test measurements are subjected to a standard procedure which yields a single number that is about equal to the average sound reduction in the middle of the human hearing range.
Specific Sound Level, LA_{eq,Tr}	Equivalent continuous A-weighted sound pressure level produced by the specific sound source at the assessment location over a given time interval T.
Weighted Sound Reduction Index dB R_w	Single number rating used to describe the laboratory airborne sound insulation properties of a material or building element over a range of frequencies, typically 100-3150Hz.
C_{TR}	An adjustment to the R _w scale to take account of the lower performance against a typical spectrum of road traffic noise dominated by low frequencies.
D_{ne,W}	Weighted element normalised level difference.
PPV	Ground vibration is measured in terms of Peak Particle Velocity (PPV) with units in mm/s. It should be noted that the PPV refers to the movement within the ground of molecular particles and not surface movement. The displacement value in mm refers to the movement of particles at the surface (surface movement).