



Environmental Best Practice Guidance Note – noise emissions from vehicle reversing alarms

This guidance represents the Scottish Environment Protection Agency's view on environmental best practice; nothing in this guidance affects the Operator's responsibilities under Health & Safety Legislation.

Standard tonal reversing alarms (STRAs) are commonly used to alert people to the potential dangers associated with reversing vehicles. However, these tonal alarms also have the potential to cause annoyance to noise sensitive receptors in the vicinity of a site. Where vehicle movement comes under the control of an environmental licence, SEPA will expect the Operator to carry out a risk assessment to determine the most appropriate mechanism of control. The use of STRAs will not be accepted as a default position in lieu of a proper risk assessment.

Where SEPA regulate noise emissions from Waste Management Sites (under Part II of the Environmental Protection Act 1990) and Part A PPC Installations (under the Pollution Prevention and Control (Scotland) Regulations 2012), the risk assessment should consider the following hierarchy of control:

- Design traffic routing and vehicle selection to avoid / minimise the requirement for vehicle reversing
- Switch off alarms and introduce a banksman where feasible
- Where vehicle reversing alarms are required, they should be designed to cause the lowest practical environmental impact; preferably they should be directional broadband noise emitters or automatically adjusted to ambient noise levels.

Applicants and Operators are expected to justify their choice of alarms with reference to the above hierarchy of control and SEPA will set conditions in environmental licences, where appropriate, to reflect noise control requirements.

It is the responsibility of the Operator to ensure that any conditions of an environmental licence are complied with. As such, SEPA would expect Operators to introduce such controls as are necessary to ensure that third parties involved in delivery or dispatch activities ensure the environmental impact of their activities, including that from noise emissions, is minimised.

