FEHILY TIMONEY

DESIGNING AND DELIVERING
A SUSTAINABLE FUTURE

Appendix 13.1

Glossary of Acoustic Terminology

Ambient noise	The totally encompassing sound in a given situation at a given time, usually composed of sound from many sources, near and far.
Background noise	The steady existing noise level present without contribution from any intermittent sources. The A-weighted sound pressure level of the residual noise at the assessment position that is exceeded for 90 per cent of a given time interval, T ($L_{AF90,T}$).
Broadband	Sounds that contain energy distributed across a wide range of frequencies.
dB	Decibel - The scale in which sound pressure level is expressed. It is defined as 20 times the logarithm of the ratio between the RMS pressure of the sound field and the reference pressure of 20 micropascals (20 μPa).
Free-field	These are conditions in which the radiation from sound sources is unaffected by the presence of any reflecting boundaries or the source itself. In practice, it is a field in which the effects of the boundaries are negligible over the frequency range of interest. In environmental noise, true free-field measurement conditions are seldom achieved and generally the microphone will be positioned at a height between 1.2 and 1.5 metres above ground level. To minimise the influence of reflections, measurements are generally made at least 3.5 metres from any reflecting surface other than the ground.
Hertz (Hz)	The unit of sound frequency in cycles per second.
Impulsive	A noise that is of short duration (typically less than one second), the sound pressure level of which is significantly higher than the background.
L_{Aeq}	The average level recorded over the sampling period. The closer the L_{Aeq} value is to either the L_{A10} or L_{A90} value indicates the relative impact of the intermittent sources and their contribution. The relative spread between the values determines the impact of intermittent sources such as traffic on the background.

L_{A10}	Refers to those A-rated noise levels in the top 10 percentile of the sampling interval; it is the level which is exceeded for 10% of the measurement period. It is used to determine the intermittent high noise level features of locally generated noise and usually gives an indicator of the level of traffic.
L_{A90}	Refers to those A-rated noise levels in the lower 90 percentile of the sampling interval; it is the level which is exceeded for 90% of the measurement period. It will therefore exclude the intermittent features of traffic and is used to estimate a background level.
Noise	Any sound, that has the potential to cause disturbance, discomfort or psychological stress to a person exposed to it, or any sound that could cause actual physiological harm to a person exposed to it, or physical damage to any structure exposed to it, is known as noise.
Noise Sensitive Location (NSL)	Any dwelling house, hotel or hostel, health building, educational establishment, place of worship or entertainment, or any other installation/facility or area of high amenity which for its proper enjoyment requires the absence of noise at nuisance levels.
Octave band	A frequency interval, the upper limit of which is twice that of the lower limit. For example, the 1,000Hz octave band contains acoustical energy between 707Hz and 1,414Hz. The centre frequencies used for the designation of octave bands are defined in ISO and ANSI standards.
Sound Pressure Level	Sound pressure refers to the fluctuations in air pressure caused by the passage of a sound wave. It may be expressed in terms of sound pressure level at a point, defined as: $$Lp = 20log\frac{P}{P_0}\text{dB}$$ Where: P is the sound pressure; P_0 is a reference pressure for propagation of sound in air and has a value of $2x10^{-5}$ Pa.

Sound Power Level (Lw)

The logarithmic measure of sound power in comparison to a referenced sound intensity level of one picowatt (1pW) per m^2, defined as:

$$Lw = 10log\frac{P}{P_0}\text{dB}$$

Where: p is the rms value of sound power in pascals; and P_0 is 1 pW.

Tonal

Sounds which cover a range of only a few Hz which contains a clearly audible tone, i.e. distinguishable, discrete or continuous noise (whine, hiss, screech, or hum etc.) are referred to as being 'tonal'.

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