



MINISTRY OF ENERGY

REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

**National Assembly: 107**

**107. Mr N J J van R Koornhof (Cope) to ask the Minister of Energy:**

Whether there is any noise restrictions with regard to the noise levels the PetroSA plant at Mossel Bay must adhere to; if not, why not; if so, (a) what are the maximum decibel levels, (b) have these levels been violated in the past six months and (c) what measures are in place to prevent violations?      NW112E

**Reply:**

PetroSA is registered as a mine and therefore has to comply with the requirements of the Mine Health and Safety Act (MHSA) in terms of noise.

- a) Since noise exposure is identified as a significant risk at the mine, a mandatory Code of Practice (COP) for an occupational health programme for noise was submitted to and accepted by the Department of Mineral Resources (DMR).

The noise levels at the GTL Refinery exceeds 82 dB  $A_{eq,8hr}$  (action level) and PetroSA therefore has an occupational hygiene monitoring programme for noise. This programme is managed by a Certified Occupational Hygienist and includes noise zoning, personal exposure monitoring and submission of mandatory reports to the DMR (required by regulation 9.2 of the MHSA).

- b) Recent noise zoning and personal exposure sampling reports indicate noise levels between 82 and 98 dB (A). Very high noise levels that exceeds 110 dB (A) may result during upset conditions at steam release vents on the plant. During these conditions access control is enforced where possible and the use of Variphone (Hearing Protection Device (HPD)) is mandatory.

In order to control exposure of the workforce, PetroSA implements a hearing conservation standard that requires management to take reasonable practicable measures to control the noise by eliminating sources, segregating noise sources with less noisy ones and implementing engineering and administrative controls. Since it is not always possible to control noise to below the Occupational Exposure Limit (OEL) of 85 dB (A), no person is allowed to work in the demarcated noise zones without HPD's.

- c) All employees exposed over the OEL are required to undergo audiometric testing on an annual basis to timeously identify workers with a reduction in hearing acuity. These incidents are reported by the on-site Occupational Health Practitioner and investigated to identify the root cause and to take appropriate remedial action when and where required.

It can be concluded that PetroSA is adhering to legal requirements and that all reasonable measures have been taken to protect the workforce from Noise-Induced Hearing Loss (NIHL) due to noise exposure.

**...End...**