

# IND-G-010

# Noise emissions from vehicle reversing alarms

## Version 2.0 – August 2025

## Introduction

## 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)

## 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 authorisation, 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.

## Risk Assessment

Where SEPA regulate noise emissions from waste management sites under Schedule 11 of the Environmental Authorisation (Scotland) Regulations 2018 (EASR) and relevant industrial sites under Schedules 19 and 27 of EASR, 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 (a trained and competent person who helps to ensure work activities involving vehicles and mobile plant are carried out safely) 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 authorisation 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.

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