

PRESS RELEASE

Sound level limits for personal music players and mobile phones

Brussels (9 February 2011) - CENELEC accepted a Mandate from the European Commission to develop standards satisfying the health and safety aspects of personal music players and mobile phones with a music playing function in September 2009. These standards must ensure that under reasonably foreseeable conditions of use, such devices must be inherently safe and must not cause hearing damage. Listening to personal music players regularly at high volume settings over a sustained period can lead to permanent hearing damage. This was the conclusion of the EU Scientific Committee on Emerging and Newly Identified Health Risks (SCENIHR), which published its opinion on 13 October 2008.

CENELEC Technical Committee 108X on 'Safety of electronic equipment within the fields of Audio/video, Information Technology and Communication Technology' was tasked to take the execution of the mandate on board. The work was performed by a dedicated working group with representatives and experts from market surveillance authorities, consumer interest organisations, research institutes, certification bodies and manufacturers.

The exercise resulted in the issuing of 2 amendments to already existing standards for 'Safety of audio, video and similar electronic apparatus' (EN 60065:2002) and Safety of information technology equipment (EN 60950-1:2006), which passed a formal vote by the National Standardisation Committees at the end of 2010.

The approach adopted in the standard is based on a sound level limit of 85 dBA. This is a sound level that is considered to be safe under all reasonable foreseeable conditions of use. There is the possibility however for the user to choose to override the limit so that the sound level can be increased up to a maximum of 100 dBA. In this case the user has to be provided with warnings about the risks which are repeated following each 20 hours of listening time.

After publication of the amendments in early 2011, a transition period of 24 months will follow, during which the standard will be implemented at national level by the publication of national standards. By the end of the transition period, industry should have started to apply the standard to their products.

In the meantime, the working group is expected to continue with the next step of the mandated work, which is the development of "smart" methods of providing protection against excessive sound pressure levels from personal music players based on the measurement of sound dose.

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About CENELEC

The European Committee for Electrotechnical Standardization is officially responsible for standardization in the electrotechnical field. In an ever more global economy, CENELEC fosters innovation and competitiveness, making technology available not only to major businesses but also to SMEs through the production of voluntary standards. CENELEC creates market access at the European level but also at the international level through its cooperation agreement with the International Electrotechnical Commission (IEC).

Through the work of its 31 Members together with its experts, the industry federations and consumers, Electrotechnical European Standards are created in order to help shape the European Internal Market, to encourage technological development, to ensure interoperability and to guarantee the safety and health of consumers and provide environmental protection.

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