

WORK-FROM-HOME ACOUSTICS

The COVID-19 virus developed so rapidly that it forced every company to develop work-from-home and remote working arrangements almost overnight. Many workers who had never been given the opportunity to work from home were forced into the situation by stay-at-home orders and advisories that were implemented around the world.

The outcome of this immediate change in working style resulted in widely different work-from-home conditions and experiences for many people. Work-from-home blended professional productivity and collaboration with the personal conditions of the employee. The new working arrangements produced opportunities to meet colleagues' and clients' spouses, partners, children, and pets, though some of these introductions were not intended or welcomed. These conditions also exposed the acoustical challenges associated with conducting business within one's home.

Creating Optimal Work-from-Home Conditions

Intertek's Acoustical Consulting Group has identified and developed solutions for the acoustical challenges associated with work-from-home conditions. Intertek is well positioned to help companies develop a work-from-home protocol to share with their workforce.

The protocol would provide guidance with how to handle the important acoustical factors that allow work-from-home conditions to function as productive and professional spaces, supporting a company's objectives for worker flexibility in these modern times.

The protocol document will include guidance with:

- Sound Isolation
- Noise Control
- Room Acoustics
- Communication Devices

The protocol document would provide guidance with how to handle each of these topics to address the following issues.

Sound Isolation

Productivity and effective communication require isolation from the noisy activities that surround one's workspace. Many people are familiar with the conference call interrupted by other activities in the house. These intrusions can be reduced with some thoughtful planning and modest upgrades.

The protocol document will provide guidance with selecting a suitable location to set up a home office to minimize these intrusions. In addition, we will provide guidance for products and details of how doors can be gasketed to enhance the acoustical separation when they are closed.

Noise Control

Holding a conference call can be a challenge when the heating or air-conditioning system starts up and drowns out the people talking (for all who are listening).

Guidance will be provided for common noises from heating and cooling systems and how these noises might be mitigated.

Room Acoustics

People using speakers and the computer's microphone for their conferencing system increase the potential for sounding as though they are in a shower with excessive reverberation. This condition can make speech difficult to understand for the other callers on the conference.

The protocol document will provide guidance with how to reduce this reverberation and improve speech clarity for the callers on the conference.

Communication Devices

The guidance will also provide tips for the types of microphones, headphones, headsets and other devices that can enhance the quality of the call for both the listener and the other participants.

With this guidance from Intertek, staff participation on conference calls can be elevated to the professional level expected within an office setting, while in a work-at-home setting enabling them to provide support and safety for their family.



FOR MORE INFORMATION

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