

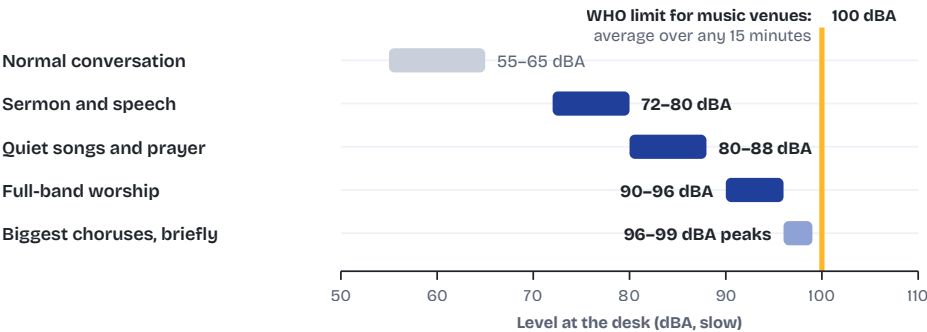
How loud is too loud?

Worship volume for pastors, worship leaders and sound teams



There’s no single right number. It depends on your room, your style of worship and your congregation. But there is a right way to decide: **agree a target with your pastor and worship leader, write it down, and measure it every week.** Volume then stops being a matter of taste, or of whoever complained last, and becomes a decision your leaders own.

Starting ranges for modern, band-led worship



Measured at the desk. Blue bars are averages; the lighter bar shows how high the biggest moments briefly reach. The gold line is the World Health Organization’s limit for a 15-minute average: a ceiling, not a target. Traditional and acoustic services usually sit lower.

Measure, don’t guess

- Ears adjust to loud sound within minutes. A meter tells the truth, and a calibrated phone app is far better than guessing.
- Set it to **A-weighting (dBA)** and **slow** response. Watch the **average over a whole song or set** (often called Leq or LAeq), not the peaks.
- Measure at the desk, then walk the room: front, back and sides.
- Churches with subs can also watch **dB**C. Note your usual gap between dBC and dBA on a good Sunday. If it grows, tidy up the kick, bass and subs before turning anything else down.

Too quiet is a problem too

If people can clearly hear their own voice over the band, many feel exposed and stop singing. A full, confident mix gives the room permission to sing out. The skill is to make it full without making it harsh.

Keep every ear safe

The six features of the WHO’s Global Standard for Safe Listening Venues and Events (2022), in a church:

- Keep the level well under an **average of 100 dBA over any 15 minutes.**
- Measure the level during every service, and write it down.
- Make the room and the system work for you, so clarity doesn’t depend on volume.
- Keep foam earplugs at the welcome desk, and ear defenders for small children.
- Offer quieter seats, away from the speakers and subs, and tell people where they are.
- Train everyone who runs sound in all of this.

Your team, too

Level (dBA)	85	88	91	94	97	100
Allowance a day	8 h	4 h	2 h	1 h	30 min	15 min

A common workplace limit: 85 dBA over an eight-hour day, halving the time for every 3 dB louder. A rehearsal and two services at 94 dBA can use it up. In-ears count on top.

This Sunday

1

Agree a target range with your pastor and worship leader.

2

Measure the worship set at the desk, in dBA with slow response.

3

Listen again once the room is full, and adjust the first song.

4

Walk to the back row and the side seats during rehearsal.

5

Put earplugs out at the welcome desk.