



HEARING CONSERVATION

Scope and Applicability Statement

This document provides general safety procedures and regulatory guidance for employers and workers in accordance with U.S. Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) standards under 29 CFR 1910.95 (Occupational Noise Exposure). These procedures apply to all workplaces where they are implemented as part of a comprehensive safety program.

Customization and Compliance Statement

Employers are responsible for ensuring compliance with all applicable local, state, and federal safety regulations. Workers must adhere to established safety protocols to maintain a safe and healthy work environment.



Purpose

The purpose of this program is to minimize employee hearing loss caused by excessive occupational exposure to noise.

Scope

This program applies to all employees and contractors who may be exposed to noise levels exceeding 85 decibels (dB) over an 8-hour time-weighted average or where impact noise reaches 140 dB peak sound pressure level at any time.

Definitions

- Audiometric Testing: A method for determining an individual's ability to detect sounds at various frequencies.
- Decibels (dB): A unit measuring sound energy, weighted to reflect human hearing sensitivity.
- Standard Threshold Shift: A change in hearing threshold of 10 dB or more at specific frequencies, indicating potential hearing loss.

Responsibilities

Managers and Supervisors:

- Ensure that the hearing conservation program is implemented and maintained.
- Provide required training and enforce compliance.

Employees:

- Wear hearing protection where required.
- Complete safety training and comply with noise exposure controls.

Procedures

Hearing Conservation Program Implementation

A hearing conservation program must be implemented when employees are exposed to noise levels exceeding 85 dB over an 8-hour time-weighted average or when impact noise reaches 140 dB.

Noise Monitoring and Surveys



- Work areas suspected of exceeding noise exposure limits must be surveyed.
- Noise monitoring will be conducted by trained personnel using calibrated equipment.
- Exposure assessments must document:
 - Location and date of survey
 - Name of person conducting the survey
 - Sound level meter details and calibration information
 - Environmental conditions
 - Employee exposure details
- Employees must be notified if their job exposure reaches or exceeds 85 dB.
- Hearing protection adequacy must be re-evaluated when noise levels increase.

Signage and Labeling

- Areas exceeding 85 dB must be clearly marked with signs indicating required hearing protection.

Audiometric Testing

- Employees exposed to noise levels at or above 85 dB must undergo audiometric testing.
- Baseline audiograms must be established within six months of an employee's first exposure.
- Annual audiograms must be conducted to monitor hearing ability.
- Employees must be notified in writing within 21 days if a standard threshold shift occurs.

Corrective Actions for Standard Threshold Shifts

- Re-evaluate and refit hearing protection.
- Provide additional training on proper PPE use.
- Conduct medical evaluations as needed.

Hearing Protection Devices



- Hearing protection must be provided to employees exposed to noise levels of 85 dB or higher.
- Employees must be allowed to choose from a selection of appropriate hearing protection devices.
- Training on proper use, care, and maintenance of hearing protection must be provided at no cost.

Training Requirements

- Employees exposed to action level noise must complete annual training.
- Training must cover:
 - Noise hazards and hearing loss prevention
 - Proper use and maintenance of hearing protection devices
 - Audiometric testing procedures and requirements
- Training records must be maintained and available for review.

Recordkeeping

- All noise exposure measurements and audiometric test results must be retained for at least 30 years after employment.
- Records must be accessible to employees, regulatory agencies, and designated representatives.