



SECTION 3 **CHAPTER 3**

HEARING PROTECTION

Purpose This chapter describes the Hearing Conservation Program, which serves to prevent on-the-job noise induced hearing loss.

Scope These regulations apply to all company employees and contractors under direct supervision of company employees.

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Establishing the Hearing Conservation Program

Purpose To establish a Hearing Conservation Program, which will aid in preventing on-the-job noise induced hearing loss.

IF it has been documented that on-the-job noise exposures do **not** exceed an 8 hour TWA of 85 dBA, **THEN management will determine whether or not to implement all or parts of the following program.**

Required protective measures

In high noise areas:

- minimize noise as much as possible through engineering controls
- post “Hearing Protection Required” signs to warn employees and visitors in compliance with OSHA 1910.95(b)(1)
- wear approved hearing protection
- use periodic noise inspections to monitor sound levels

Minimizing noise Use engineering controls to reduce noise whenever possible.

IF engineering controls fail to reduce sound levels below acceptable levels, **THEN** employees must use approved hearing protection, at no cost to employees, to reduce sound levels.



Using hearing protection

Employees working in areas where the noise level is above 85 dBA will wear approved hearing protection. The company will provide, at no cost to employees, two means of hearing protection devices which are ear plugs and ear muffs.

These devices are assigned specific noise reduction rating (NRR) numbers. The higher the NRR rating, the more effective the device is for reducing noise.

Employees will ensure effective noise reduction by fitting and sealing the plug or muff to their ear properly.



Conducting Noise Surveys

Purpose

This document establishes the requirements for conducting noise surveys, including the responsibilities of the safety department and location supervisors, as well as the methods for conducting the surveys.

Responsibilities of the Safety Department

The safety department or third party vendor will periodically survey the workplace for noise.

Responsibilities of the Yard Manager and Supervisor

- Yard Management and Supervisors are responsible for requesting noise surveys where non-routine or maintenance operations generate noise levels suspected to exceed 85 dBA
- working around engines or compressors

The Yard Manager/Supervisor or designee will maintain all records of noise surveys.

Required noise inspections

Noise inspections are required whenever noise is increased by a change in:

- production
- process
- equipment **OR**
- controls

The safety department or third party vendor may also survey the workplace for noise whenever:

- an area or process is suspected of having high noise volume
 - new equipment is moved into an area
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Personal noise surveys

The safety department or designee will also conduct periodic personal noise monitoring for all “high noise” job classifications. Results of these monitoring will be forwarded in writing to the employee.

Conducting noise inspections

The safety department or designee will use approved and properly calibrated noise level devices to conduct the noise-monitoring surveys.

The surveys will include information indicating that employee’s exposure may equal or exceed an 8-hour time-weighted average (TWA) sound level of 85 dBA.



Responding to survey results

IF the survey results indicate noise levels greater than 85 dBA, **THEN** supervisors must:

- minimize noise
- post signs
- issue hearing protection equipment to all personnel as described in “Establishing a Hearing Conservation Program”

Performing Audiometric Testing

Purpose This document outlines the requirements for audiometric testing, including:

- required tests
- authorized personnel
- the procedure for quantifying an audiogram
- the procedure for handling threshold shifts
- documentation

Required tests An audiogram is the chart, graph, or table resulting from an audiometric test showing an individual’s hearing threshold level as a function of frequency.

The following table outlines the audiograms required by the Company.

Who	What	When
all employees exposed to noise levels exceeding an 8 hour TWA of 85 dBA	Baseline Audiograms with follow-up audiograms	Within 6 months of an employees first exposure at or above the action level and annually

Testing Testing to establish a baseline audiogram shall be proceeded by at least 14 hours without exposure to workplace noise. Hearing protection may be used to meet the requirement. Employees shall also be notified to avoid high levels of noise.



Recordkeeping The company shall maintain accurate records of all employee exposure measurements. These records will be kept at the area office where the employee works.

Authorized personnel A qualified audiologist will review all audiograms.

Quantifying an audiogram The conventional method of determining a standard threshold shift is using a baseline audiogram to determine the extent of hearing loss at:

- 2,000 Hz
- 3,000 Hz
- 4,000 Hz

An individual who has sustained an average loss of more than 15 decibels at these frequencies in either ear is considered to have a change in hearing threshold. At least annually, after obtaining the baseline audiogram, the employer shall obtain a new audiogram for each employee exposed at or above an 8 hour TWA of 85 decibels. Each employee's annual audiogram shall be compared to that employee's baseline audiogram to determine if the audiogram is valid and if a standard threshold shift has occurred. If a comparison of the annual audiogram to the baseline audiogram indicates a standard threshold shift, the employee shall be informed of this fact in writing, within 21 days of the determination.



**Handling
threshold shifts**

IF the audiogram reveals a significant threshold shift, **THEN** review the findings with the employee to determine whether the threshold shift has been caused by on-the-job noise exposure.

IF the shift has been caused by on-the-job noise exposure, **THEN** take appropriate corrective action. This action will include a **Medical Evaluation** and either additional hearing protection or a job re-assignment of the employee.

**Documenting
the tests**

Employees will be notified of the results of the testing in writing.

The Yard Manager or designee will keep all audiometric test records in the employee's file.

Employees or their representatives may access these records by submitting a written request to the Human Resource Department.

Providing Employee Training

Purpose This document describes the training for the Hearing Conservation Program.

Overview The company has developed annual training for the Hearing Conservation Program that is provided to affected employees and awareness training for all employees and new hires.

- Employees shall be properly trained in the use, care and fitting of hearing protection.
- Training shall be updated consistent to changes in PPE and work processes.
- All training must be documented, filed at the area office and available for review by Governmental Agencies, employees, employee representation and company representatives.

Note: The HSE Coordinator or designee will, at the Area Manager's request, be available to assist in these training programs.
