



West Virginia University Hearing Conservation Program

I. Statement, Purpose, and Scope

- A. **Statement:** The University is committed to providing a safe and healthful workplace; including evaluating workplace noise exposures and taking action to prevent noise-induced hearing loss.
- B. **Purpose:** To establish written procedures to evaluate workplace noise exposures and to monitor employees that may have encountered workplace noise in compliance with 29 CFR 1910.95 Occupational Noise Exposure.
- C. **Scope:** This program covers all University employees.

II. Program Review

EHS will coordinate a review of the program annually or as necessary.

III. Responsible Parties

A. Environmental Health and Safety

- 1. Assign a Hearing Conservation Program Administrator.
- 2. Maintain thorough knowledge of OSHA 29 CFR 1910.95 Occupational Noise Exposure.
- 3. Monitor areas for noise where:
 - a. There is a suspected change in noise levels due to construction, demolition, or addition of structures or equipment.
 - b. Historical or suspected noise exposure above the OSHA permissible exposure limit exists.
- 4. Receive and respond to employee complaints.
- 5. Contact Departments annually to notify them of the need to schedule hearing evaluations.
- 6. Schedule annual Hearing Conservation Program training for employees included in the Hearing Conservation Program.
- 7. Communicate requirements to appropriate departments and University community.
- 8. Maintain Hearing Conservation Program records as outlined in Section VII of this document.
- 9. Schedule and conduct training.
- 10. Identify employees required to be included in program.

B. Department

- 1. Deans and/or Directors
 - a. Appoint a representative from their College or Department to communicate with the EHS Representative:
 - b. Maintain accurate records of who is included in the Hearing Conservation Program.



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- c. Update records of included employees eligibility for the Hearing Conservation Program based on their job assignment and job status at the University.
 - d. Notify EHS Representatives of new hires, retirements, transfers, terminations, etc. that may affect the list of employees in the Hearing Conservation Program.
 - e. Implement engineering and/or administrative controls as needed to reduce noise exposures, as outlined in Section IV. D. of this document.
 - f. Post "Hearing Protection Required" signs in areas of noise exposure, as advised by EHS.
 - g. Schedule employees' annual hearing evaluations with the Hearing Clinic.
2. Supervisors
- a. Purchasing and supplying hearing protection for employees.
 - b. Placing hearing protection supplies at work locations.
 - c. Ensuring employees use hearing protection as needed.
 - d. Notifying EHS of any This may include addition, removal, or replacement of equipment; or changes in work processes or locations.
3. Employee
- a. Wear hearing protection.
 - b. Request evaluation if changes in noise levels that may require re-evaluation of their areas.
 - c. Attend scheduled appointments.

C. Hearing Clinic

- 1. The Hearing Clinic will abide by all current OSHA regulations in the performance of employee baseline evaluations and annual audiograms.
- 2. The Hearing Clinic shall copy EHS on all employee hearing evaluations/audiograms as they are completed.

IV. Investigating Complaints

- A. Employees or supervisors who have occupational noise exposure complaints may contact EHS at 304-293-3792 for evaluation of the work area and potential inclusion in the Hearing Conservation Plan.

V. Procedures

A. Hearing Conservation Plan

- 1. Employee noise exposure shall be computed in accordance with 29 CFR 1910.95, Appendix A, Table G-16a, without regard to any attenuation provided by the use of personal protective equipment.

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2. An employee shall be included in the Hearing Conservation Program if his/her noise exposures equal or exceed an 8-hour TWA sound level of 85 decibels measured on the A scale (slow response) or an equivalent dose of 50 percent.
 3. Persons who must temporarily be in an area where noise is present or who must perform transient work involving exposure to noise shall use the hearing protection provided at the work site.
- B. Employees, upon inclusion in the Hearing Conservation Program**
1. Be given a baseline audiogram within six (6) months of initial inclusion in the Hearing Conservation Program and annually thereafter.
 2. Be trained in the use of hearing protection.
 3. Receive Hearing Conservation Training at the next available training session.
- C. Sound Level Surveys**
1. Area noise surveys and personal monitoring shall be
 - a. Conducted upon request of the Dean, Director, Supervisor, Project Manager or Worker.
 - b. Conducted upon notification that the noise levels in any area may have changed.
 - c. Periodically reviewed for continued accuracy.
- D. Engineering Controls**
1. Engineering controls shall be used as the initial control method to reduce exposures.
 2. Engineering controls shall include but are not limited to
 - a. Replacement with quieter equipment, machinery, processes, or operations.
 - b. Sound source modification.
 - c. Sound path modification.
- E. Administrative Controls**
1. Administrative controls shall be used to reduce employee exposures
 2. Administrative controls shall include but are not limited to
 - a. Worker rotation.
 - b. Isolation of the worker from the noise.
- F. Personal Protective Equipment**
1. When Engineering and Administrative Controls fail to reduce worker exposure to levels below the Permissible Exposure Limit, personnel are required to wear hearing protection devices while exposed.
 2. Hearing protection devices shall be made available to employee by the employer.
 3. Each type of hearing protection must attenuate to, or below, an 8-hour TWA of 85 dBA, or its equivalent.
 4. EHS shall make the determination as to which hearing protection devices are appropriate for an area or project and inform the Dean, Director, or Supervisor for said area or project.



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5. Departments shall place hearing protection at the worksite in locations that are posted as "Hearing Protection Required" areas, or in areas where noise is known to exist periodically.
 6. EHS shall be notified by the Dean, Director, Supervisor, or worker of any changes in work areas so that hearing protection can be re-evaluated for adequacy as needed.
- G. Audiometric Testing**
1. Audiometric testing shall be provided on an annual basis at no cost to the employees who are included in the Hearing Conservation Program.
 2. Audiometric testing shall be conducted by a licensed or certified audiologist, otolaryngologist, physician, nurse, or technician certified by the Council of Accreditation in Occupational Hearing Conservation.
 3. A valid baseline audiogram shall be established within six (6) months of an employee entering the Hearing Conservation Program.
 4. Baseline audiogram testing shall be proceeded by at least 14 hours without exposure to high levels of noise, either by absence from the areas of high noise or by use of hearing protection.
 5. Each employee's annual audiogram shall be compared to their baseline audiogram to determine if a standard threshold shift has occurred.
 6. If the annual audiogram shows a standard threshold shift, a retest may be done within 30 days.
 7. An audiologist, otolaryngologist, or physician shall review all problem audiograms and determine the need for further evaluation.
 8. Determination of a standard threshold shift may allow for the contribution of aging (presbycusis) to the change in hearing level by correcting the annual audiogram according to the procedure described in 29 CFR 1910.95 Appendix F.
 9. If a standard threshold shift is found
 - a. The employee will be notified within 21 days.
 - b. EHS will reinvestigate the work area for changes in noise levels and the need for improved engineering and administrative controls.
 - c. Employee hearing protection availability and usage will be reviewed to determine adequacy.

VI. Training

- A. Training shall be provided to all employees included in the Hearing Conservation Program on an annual basis by EHS.
- B. Training shall include
 1. Updated information consistent with changes in protective equipment and/or work processes.
 2. The effects of noise on hearing.



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3. The purpose of hearing protectors, advantages, disadvantages, and attenuation of various types of hearing protection.
4. Instructions on selection, fitting, use, and care of hearing protection.
5. The purpose of audiometric testing and an explanation of the procedures.
6. A copy of the OSHA Standard and any other applicable information provided by OSHA.

VII. Recordkeeping

- A. EHS shall retain employee audiometric test records for the duration of employment plus ten years.
- B. Noise exposure assessments shall be kept for a minimum of two years.
- C. Records shall be provided upon request to employees, former employees, representatives appointed by the individual employee, and the OSHA Assistant Secretary.