

Hearing Conservation Program Details

Responsibilities

Supervisor- the supervisor is responsible for implementing the program requirements described in the UO policy and this written program. It is each supervisor's responsibility to determine whether operations under their control require noise surveys. Additionally, they will assist the Environmental Health and Safety (EHS) with the identification of employees that must be enrolled in the program. Supervisors will arrange for training by EHS to ensure that their employees are trained, as outlined in this program, and receive appropriate medical evaluation. The supervisor will notify each employee exposed at or above the Action Level (8-hour TWA of 85 decibels), of the results of the monitoring.

Employee- the employee is responsible to use the information they learn from the training they receive. Employees are also responsible for the daily inspection of their equipment, notifying the appropriate personnel when they need new hearing protection, and notifying their supervisor or EHS if they experience difficulty in fitting or using the hearing protection. Additionally, employees are responsible for the appropriate storage, disposal, and cleaning of their hearing protection that is consistent with the training they received.

Environmental Health and Safety- the Office of Environmental Health and Safety will conduct noise level measurements and surveys at the request of the department, supervisor, or employee. EHS will conduct training regarding this program. EHS maintains the current written program for the hearing conservation program. They consult with supervisors and employees regarding exposures, and appropriate hearing protection. Additionally, EHS will maintain records of the employees' audiometric exams and survey results.

EHS will provide audiometric testing services to all employees that have been determined to be at risk of exposure at the Action Level or above as defined by OSHA. Audiometric testing will be conducted by an independent testing firm, during multiple annual testing events. Each department will be notified and audiometric testing will be scheduled by EHS for applicable employees.

Independent Testing Firm – the Independent Testing Firm will be responsible for performing the audiometric exam as scheduled with EHS, and notifying EHS if the employee has a standard threshold shift. They keep records of their audiometric equipment testing, and calibrations. Additionally, they will send a copy of the results from the audiometric exam to the EHS office.

Definitions

“Action Level” is the level at which the employer must take the required precautions to protect the workers. The current Action Level for occupational exposure to noise is 85 decibels.

“Attenuation” means to lessen the amount, force, magnitude, or value of.

"Audiogram" is a chart, graph, or table resulting from an audiometric test showing an individual's hearing threshold levels as a function of frequency.

"Baseline audiogram" is the audiogram against which future audiograms are compared.

"Decibels (dB)" are a unit of measurement of sound levels.

"Permissible noise exposure" is the allowable amount of noise that a person can be exposed to. in an 8 hour work day, the U.S law currently allows exposure to 90 dB for 8 hours. Refer to 1910.95 Table G-16 for complete permissible noise exposure guidelines. "Sound level meter" is an instrument for the measurement of sound level.

"Standard Threshold Shift" means a temporary, chronic, or permanent change or shift in a person's hearing of at least an average of 10 dBs.

"TWA" is the time-weighted average concentration for a conventional 8-hour workday and 40-hour workweek. This is the concentration to which it is believed that nearly all workers may be repeatedly exposed, day after day, without adverse health effects.

Audiometric Testing

Audiometric exams are to be conducted by an independent testing firm as facilitated by EHS. The records of those test results will be maintained by EHS according to Oregon OSHA. A baseline audiogram must be conducted within 180 days of employee hire. The supervisor's awareness of noise problems in their area is necessary to assure compliance with this aspect of the code. It is the responsibility of the department and/or supervisors to notify EHS of a new hire that needs audiometric testing; EHS will schedule the testing. Employees must avoid both occupational and non-occupational noise exposure for fourteen (14) hours prior to the exam. Those employees who cannot avoid noise exposure during this period must wear hearing protectors.

Record Keeping

EHS will retain records of the audiograms of each employee in the hearing conservation program for the length of that person's employment plus 30 years. Additionally, EHS will retain a copy of the hearing conservation program.

Program Evaluation

Annually, this program will be reviewed and updated as necessary. Additionally, random employees working under this program will be consulted on the effectiveness of the program and asked of any problems they may be having with noise attenuation, their hearing protection, or problems with the program. Identified problems will be corrected.

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