

Sample Hearing Conservation Program

Purpose:

The purpose of this plan is to establish a program and procedures for hearing conservation at (Organization Name). This program applies to all areas that have operations that produce employee noise exposures equal to or in excess of 85 dBA (decibels, A-weighting), as an 8-hour time-weighted average (TWA).

The Occupational Safety and Health Administration Occupational Noise Exposure Standards 29 CFR 1910.95 (General Industry) and 29 CFR 1926.52 (Construction Industry) and the Mine Safety and Health Administration Occupational Noise Exposure Standard 30 CFR Part 62 call for the development, implementation and maintenance of a hearing conservation program when employee exposure to noise is equal to or exceeds an 8-hour TWA of 85 dBA. The written hearing conservation program will include and address the following categories in order to satisfy the minimum requirements of the applicable Occupational Noise Exposure Standard:

- Noise exposure monitoring (area and/or personal)
- Audiometric testing for employees exposed to noise equal to or in excess of 85 dBA, as an 8-hour TWA
- Hearing protection provided and utilized
- Employee training
- Record keeping

The hearing conservation program will include the following:

- Identification of personnel responsible for the program.
- How noise levels and employee exposures will be measured.
- How audiometric testing will be performed.
- How hearing protection will be selected, provided, replaced and use enforced.
- How training will be performed.
- Procedures to evaluate and update the program.
- How records will be maintained.

President, CEO

Safety Coordinator

Date

Date

Responsibilities:

The safety coordinator, _____ (Name, Title) _____, is responsible for administering the hearing conservation program.

This person is also responsible for:

- Monitoring noise via sound-level measurements or dosimetry in order to determine employee exposure to noise.
- Making available to employees copies of the applicable Occupational Noise Exposure Standard and posting a copy of the standard in the workplace, such as on the employee bulletin board.
- Administering the audiometric testing program.
- Providing annual training for employees.
- Notifying employees of noise monitoring and audiometric testing results.
- Maintaining noise exposure monitoring, audiometric testing and training records.
- Reviewing the effectiveness of the hearing conservation program and making sure that it satisfies the requirements of all applicable federal, state or local hearing conservation requirements.

The safety coordinator, along with management, is responsible for the following aspects of the hearing conservation program:

- Enforcing the use of hearing protection by employees required to wear it.
- Ensuring that the hearing protectors are in good condition and are fitted and used correctly.
- Ensuring that hearing protectors provide adequate attenuation (i.e., the noise reduction rating is adequate).
- Enforcing administrative and engineering controls within the facility to reduce employee noise exposure.
- Proper care of hearing protection, including location of supply, and proper use and replacement of hearing protection equipment.

Employees are responsible for the following aspects of the hearing conservation program:

- Wearing hearing protection in work areas requiring it.
- Knowledge and understanding of the consequences associated with not following company policy concerning the proper use of hearing protection.
- Proper care of hearing protection, including proper use, routine care and cleaning, storage, and replacement.

Determination of Sound Levels:

To determine employee exposure, noise monitoring will be conducted and repeated whenever there is a change in the work environment, such as changes in production, process, equipment and/or controls.

Noise exposure monitoring will be conducted using the following methods:

- **Area monitoring** - Measuring the noise levels in an area by use of a sound level meter.
- **Personal monitoring** - Measuring an employee's noise exposure by use of a dosimeter. A dosimeter is worn by an employee for a representative time frame in order to evaluate noise levels that the employee is exposed to when doing his or her particular job.

Audiometric Testing:

The purpose of audiometric testing is to determine each employee's hearing threshold by determining the employee's response to noise at several frequencies. A baseline audiogram will be conducted within six months of the employee's first exposure to noise at or above the action level. If a mobile test van is used, the baseline audiogram will be conducted within one year of an employee's first exposure to noise at or above the action level. (Note: Where baseline audiograms are obtained more than six months after the employee's first exposure to noise at or above the action level, employees must wear hearing protectors for any period exceeding six months after first exposure until the baseline audiogram is obtained.)

The initial audiogram will be used as a baseline measurement to which all subsequent audiograms will be compared. Audiometric testing will be completed annually for all employees whose exposures equal or exceed an 8-hour TWA of 85 dBA.

Audiometric testing will be performed by either (Testing Agency Name) , the designated medical provider, or by a contracted and accredited audiometric testing company.

The audiometric testing will be performed at no cost to the employee.

Employees who are to receive audiograms during a workday must wear hearing protection prior to their tests or have been exempt from workplace noise for a period of 14 hours prior to the testing procedures. During the 14 hours prior to the testing, the employees shall refrain from any noisy non-work exposures such as listening to loud music, mowing the lawn, target practice and woodworking.

The annual audiogram will be compared to the baseline audiogram to determine if the audiogram is valid and if a standard threshold shift (STS) has occurred. An STS is defined as the average hearing loss of 10 dB or more at the tested frequencies of 2,000, 3,000 and 4,000 Hz in either ear.

If an STS is identified, the following steps will be taken:

1. Employees will be notified of the results in writing within 21 days (miners must be notified within 10 days) of the determination. Employees will also be fitted and trained in the use of hearing protection equipment.
2. Employees already wearing hearing protection will be refitted and retrained in the proper use of hearing protection. Hearing protection offering greater noise reduction will be provided to the affected employees.
3. An employee may be referred for a clinical audiological evaluation or an otological examination for additional testing.
4. The safety coordinator, along with management, will review the effectiveness of any engineering and administrative controls to identify and correct any deficiencies.

Evaluation of the results of the audiograms will be performed by the testing agency (either the designated medical provider or the contracted company). Organization Name will follow all recommendations made for each employee by the tester.

If the results of the audiogram demonstrate an STS, the company reserves the right to conduct a second audiogram within 30 days and consider these results as the annual audiogram.

Hearing Protection:

Employees included in the hearing conservation program will be provided with hearing protection as follows:

- Hearing protection will be provided at no cost to employees
- Employees will be able to select their hearing protection from a variety of suitable hearing protectors (Note: Employees must be provided with a choice of at least one type of ear plug and one type of earmuffs at the very minimum)
- Employees will receive training in the use and care of hearing protection
- The use of hearing protection will be required for employees who have not yet had a baseline audiogram, who have experienced an STS, or whose exposures exceed an 8-hour TWA of 85 dBA

Training:

Employees included in the hearing conservation program will receive the following annual training:

- The effects of noise on the human ear and hearing
- The purpose of hearing protection, including the advantages and disadvantages of various types of hearing protection
- The proper selection, fitting, use and care of hearing protection
- The purpose and value of noise exposure monitoring and audiometric testing and a summary of the procedures
- The company's and employees' respective tasks for maintaining noise controls

Recordkeeping:

The safety coordinator will maintain records pertaining to the hearing conservation program in a confidential manner. Any requests for records should be directed to him or her. The safety coordinator will keep the following records:

- Noise exposure monitoring results
- Audiometric testing records
- Certificates of training
- Warnings issued to employees for not following the hearing conservation program

I, (Print Employee's Name) have read and understand the hearing conservation program at (Organization Name) .

Employee Signature: _____ Date: _____