



SafetyAlert

We're Serious About Safety

Hearing Conservation

Every year, tens of millions of workers are exposed to hazardous noise levels on the job, and thousands suffer from preventable hearing loss. Since hearing loss cannot be repaired, it is important to control exposure to hazardous noise levels. Noise-induced hearing loss limits your ability to hear high frequency sounds and understand speech, which seriously impairs your ability to communicate. Hearing aids may help, but they do not restore your hearing to normal. Hearing loss is pervasive. It is also preventable.

Hearing conservation programs strive to prevent occupational hearing loss, preserve and protect remaining hearing, and equip workers with the knowledge and hearing protection devices necessary to safeguard themselves.

Noise-induced hearing loss can be temporary or permanent. Temporary hearing loss results from short-term exposures to noise, with normal hearing returning after a period of rest. Generally, prolonged exposure to high noise levels over a period of time can cause permanent damage.



OSHA requires a formal Hearing Conservation Program (HCP) when noise levels are found to be at or greater than 85 dB for an 8-hour time weighted average. OSHA's Hearing Conservation Standard (1910.95) is designed to protect workers with significant occupational noise exposures from hearing impairment even if they have been subject to such noise exposures over their entire working lifetimes.

Hearing Conservation Program - Basic Components

1. Regular monitoring of environmental noise exposure levels
2. Annual Audiometric (hearing) Testing of exposed employees
3. Baseline Audiogram and Annual Audiograms – within 6 months of hire
4. Providing approved hearing protection equipment to all workers exposed to 8-hour time weighted average (TWA) noise levels of 85 dB or above
5. Training on hearing conservation facts and prevention techniques
6. Recordkeeping of all testing, training, and employee reports.

Hearing Conservation Checklist

- Have you evaluated your operations for noise levels to determine if hearing protection is required?
- Do your operations contain production areas with noise levels at or greater than 85 dB?
- Are employees required or requested to work in the areas with noise levels at or above 85 dB?

IF YES....DO YOU

- Maintain annual hearing (audiometric) screenings for all exposed employees?
- Retain all records of audiometric testing for the duration of worker's employment?
- Provide approved hearing protection equipment controls to all employees?
- Conduct annual training on how to properly fit and care for PPE (Personal Protective Equipment)?
- Promote a process to ensure proper exposure monitoring, PPE usage, and training?



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