



Policies & Procedures Manual

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Policy Number:

WS-01-08

Approved by:

Senior Executive Council

Section:

WORKPLACE HEALTH and SAFETY -
GENERAL

Effective Date:

May 17, 2017

Title:

HEARING CONSERVATION

Replaces:

WS-01-08 (April 22, 2013)

POLICY STATEMENT

To recognize that excessive exposure to sound (noise) can produce noise-induced hearing loss, to take appropriate measures to suppress the noise to approved levels and, where required, to isolate the employees from the noise.

REFERENCE

Workplace Safety and Health Regulations

PROCEDURES

1. Application

Employees, who are required to work in areas in which the equivalent sound level exposure may exceed 85 dBA, shall receive periodic assessment of the worker's exposure.

Employees, who are required to work in areas where the equivalent sound level exposure may exceed the maximum permissible 85 dBA, shall be isolated from the noise and/or the employer shall take appropriate measures to suppress the noise to approved levels.

2. Action Levels

Where sound exposure levels exceed those specified in Column A, the actions specified in Column B should be undertaken

| | A | B |
|---------|-----------------|--|
| L ex | 80 to 85 dBA | Worker education; hearing tests; voluntary use of hearing protectors |
| L ex | 85+ dBA | Worker education; hearing tests; mandatory exposure controls (see below) |

3. Exposure Controls

Noise induced hearing loss and tinnitus can be prevented by controlling exposure:

- a) **Engineering Controls:** Maintain and/or modify equipment to reduce noise emissions at the source or enclose the source and/or receptor (worker).
- b) **Administrative Controls:** Reduce time spent in noisy areas, reduce the number of exposed workers or provide quiet periods by modifying work cycles.
- c) **Personal Hearing Protection:** Use ear plugs, ear muffs or canal caps to reduce the amount of sound energy reaching the ear drum.

Responsibilities

The employer shall provide a hearing conservation program consisting of:

- a) worker and supervisor education and training;
 - b) monitoring of sound levels and worker exposure to noise;
 - c) implementation of engineering and/or work practice controls to reduce exposure to 85 dBA or lower where reasonably practicable;
 - d) audiometric testing, evaluation and follow-up;
 - e) provision of hearing protection devices;
 - f) record keeping
1. If a worker is or is likely to be exposed to noise in a workplace that exceeds 80 dBA Lex but does not exceed 85 dBA Lex, the employer must:
 - a. Inform a worker about the hazards of the level of noise; and
 - b. on request of the worker, provide him or her with
 - i. a hearing protector that complies with CAN/CSA Standard-Z94.2-02, *Hearing Protection Devices – Performance, Selection, Care, and Use*, and
 - ii. information about the selection, use and care of the hearing protector.
 2. When a worker is exposed to noise in a workplace that exceeds 85 dBA Lex, the employer must:
 - a. If reasonably practicable, implement sound control measures that reduce the noise to which the worker is exposed to 85 dBA Lex or less.
 - b. When it is not reasonably practicable to implement sound control measures, or the sound control measures implemented by an employer do not reduce the worker's noise exposure to 85 dBA Lex or less, the employer must:
 - i. Inform the worker about the hazards of the level of noise;
 - ii. provide the worker with:
 1. a hearing protector that complies with CAN/CSA Z94.2-02 and reduces the worker's noise exposure to 85 dBA or less; and
 2. information about the selection, use and care of the hearing protector
 - iii. at the employer's expense, provide the worker with the following audiometric tests:
 1. an initial baseline test as soon as is reasonably practicable but not later than 70 days after the worker is initially exposed to that noise level,
 2. a further test at least once every year after the initial baseline test.

3. The immediate supervisor shall investigate, in cooperation with the Workplace Safety and Health Committee, the possibilities of excessive noise levels in those areas where the employees are required to perform work operations. If the noise level at the location exceeds or could possibly exceed the maximum permissible, he/she shall order, as required, hearing protection devices and instruct the employee in the use of those devices and ensure the employee complies.

Annual Report

1. UCN will prepare an annual written report of audiometric testing setting out a detailed account of the steps taken to comply with this policy and the Workplace Safety and Health Act and Regulations.
2. The annual report must include:
 - a. The sound control measures taken at the workplace; and
 - b. Statistics in respect of the number of workers:
 - i. Who received audiometric testing,
 - ii. Who experienced an abnormal audiogram or an abnormal shift, and
 - iii. Whose abnormal audiogram and abnormal shift was, in the opinion of the physician or audiologist who reviewed the test results, a result of exposure to noise at the workplace.
3. Within 30 days after having the annual report prepared, UCN must provide a copy of it to:
 - a. The physician or audiologist engaged by UCN;
 - b. The Workplace Safety and Health Committee; and
 - c. The Director of the Workplace Safety and Health Branch.

Hearing Protection Devices

1. The following hearing protective devices are available:
 - a) ear plugs which are inserted to block the external ear canal – they come in two broad types: formable and pre-moulded;
 - b) ear muffs which are placed over the external ear;
 - c) helmets which cover the whole head and contain cap-attached muffs;

The most effective model meeting the requirements of the worker and the regulation shall be determined by the manager/supervisor in consultation with the worker and a representative from the Workplace Safety and Health Committee.

Designation of Hazardous Locations

1. Warning signs shall be conspicuously posted by the local management at the entrances of any work area where sound levels exceed or may exceed the sound exposure limits.
2. The local management shall be responsible to provide two (2) acceptable sets of hearing protective devices for visitors at the entrance to all posted areas.
3. For information related to noise levels, in areas where local management is in doubt, contact the Health and Safety Officer in your area.
4. Equipment such as diesel power plants, which are used out of doors and generate noise which exceeds or may exceed the sound exposure limit, must display a warning sign in a conspicuous location, specifying the use of hearing protection while in operation.

Ordering

Hearing protective devices and warning signs shall be ordered as required. Cost of such items shall be charged to the appropriate department account.

Availability

Hearing protective devices are available at local safety protection supply distributors.