

Sample Framework for a Hearing Conservation Program*

(Name of Company)

(Date)

The purpose of this Hearing Conservation Program is to establish guidelines for the prevention of occupational noise-induced hearing loss. This program is available for review by all employees as requested.

Organization and Oversight

Hearing Conservation Coordinator

The (name of position) position will be designated as the Hearing Conservation Coordinator. His/her role will be communicated to all existing and new personnel via postings and announcements.

Responsibilities

All employees play an important role in the implementation and success of the Hearing Conservation Program. Following are specific responsibilities and duties:

Plant Manager/Owner

- Appoint a facility Hearing Conservation Coordinator
- Ensure that an initial evaluation is performed
- Ensure that a site hearing conservation program is fully implemented and enforced
- Ensure and support ongoing program maintenance and evaluation
- Authorize control measures as necessary

Hearing Conservation Coordinator

- Develop a written site-specific hearing conservation program
- Assist plant/organization and line management in implementing the site hearing conservation program
- Coordinate evaluations and monitoring with production schedules
- Conduct evaluations/monitoring as appropriate
- Issue hearing protection where appropriate
- Coordinate employee training and audiometric testing
- Post a copy of the standard

* This is intended as a sample program only. It is designed to serve as a reference tool to be used with the OSHA Hearing Conservation Standard as you develop your own company program.

Line Management

- Enforce use of noise control measures and hearing protection
- Notify the facility Hearing Conservation Coordinator and Plant Manager/Owner of any changes which may affect employee noise exposure
- Ensure an adequate supply of hearing protectors is available for employees

Employees

- Notify line management of any problems with control measures
- Comply with the use of hearing protection as required
- Wear, maintain and care for hearing protectors as instructed
- Notify line management of any changes which may affect employee noise exposure

Noise Assessment and Monitoring

Noise Levels

The following noise limits apply to this facility:

Shift Time	Action Level	Permissible Level
8 hours	85	90
10 hours	83	88
12 hours	82	87

Noise Assessments

- A. Noise assessments shall be conducted whenever:
 - Information exists that would indicate that employee exposures may be over the action level.
 - There is a change in production, process, equipment or controls which may significantly change the noise level.
- B. The potential for noise exposure shall also be evaluated in the planning, design and layout phases of all building modifications or newly constructed facilities.
- C. Noise assessments shall be coordinated by the Hearing Conservation Coordinator.

Noise Monitoring

- A. Noise monitoring shall be conducted annually or when process or equipment changes may affect noise levels.
- B. Noise monitoring shall be performed by (name of position or contract service).

Safety Tips from the WorkSafe People

Noise Control

Engineering controls, administrative controls and/or personal protective equipment shall be utilized to reduce noise levels within the limits defined within this program.

When high noise levels are found:

- A. Contact the (name of department) or maintenance department to determine if the noise levels can be reduced by equipment maintenance.
- B. Evaluate the feasibility of engineering controls.
- C. Evaluate the feasibility of administrative controls. Management and supervision are responsible for determining the applicable administrative control for a given operation.
- D. Evaluate the need for hearing protectors.

Hearing Protection

- A. Hearing protection shall be selected on the basis of attenuation, comfort and fit.
- B. Protectors shall be evaluated and must attenuate to less than or equal to the Action Level.
- C. The following types of hearing protection devices are offered at this facility: (list types available.)
- D. Hearing protection can be obtained from (location).
- E. Hearing protectors are **required to be used** in the following conditions and areas:
 1. Employees exposed to greater than or equal to the Permissible Level.
 2. Employees exposed to greater than or equal to the Action Level and who have a confirmed Standard Threshold Shift (STS).
 3. Employees who have not received a baseline audiogram and have been working in a hearing conservation designated area (Action Level or above) for a period of time exceeding six (6) months. Once a baseline is obtained, use of hearing protection in areas below the Permissible Level is no longer mandatory except as stated in item 2.
 4. The following areas and/or tasks require the **mandatory use** of hearing protection: (list).
- F. In the following areas the use of hearing protectors is **recommended**: (list).

Audiometric Testing

Identification of Audiometric Testing Participants

- A. All employees required to participate in the Hearing Conservation Program shall participate in **annual** audiometric testing. These include the following: (identify by job classification/title, tasks or area).
- B. The following employees are not required to participate in the Hearing Conservation Program, however, they may be offered the opportunity to participate in audiometric testing (identify by job classification/title, tasks or area).
- C. (In-house testing programs or a local testing service is used)

Safety Tips from the WorkSafe People

New or reassigned employees with potential exposure at or above the Action Level shall be given an audiometric test as soon as possible, but no later than six (6) months after hire or reassignment.

(Mobile van testing service is used)

New or reassigned employees with potential exposure at or above the Action Level shall be given an audiometric test as soon as possible, but no later than one (1) year after hire or reassignment.

Testing

Testing shall be performed by (name of testing source) in accordance with the guidelines outlined within the Hearing Conservation Program.

Testing Requirements

All testing shall be preceded by at least 14 hours without workplace noise exposure (if working on the test day, employees **must** wear hearing protection prior to the testing session.)

Interpretation

Interpretation of the audiograms shall be performed by (name of vendor).

Results

Employees shall be notified of testing results within 21 days of testing. (Name or position) is responsible for ensuring notification.

Follow-Up

Follow-up audiometric testing shall be conducted within 30 days of the receipt of test results for those individuals participating in the Hearing Conservation Program. Individuals identified by the audiogram as having a standard threshold shift will also require 30-day follow-up testing. Follow-up testing shall be arranged by (name or position). The results of this retest shall be considered the individual's annual audiometric test data and sent for interpretation to (name of vendor).

Counseling

An explanation of the STS condition and hearing protection retraining and fitting shall be given to employees whose follow-up testing confirms the presence of a standard threshold shift. This shall be performed by (name or position).

Annual Training

Training of affected employees shall be accomplished by a training session conducted by (vendor, instructor, etc.). An annual review and retraining will be required.

Contents of training shall include:

- A. The anatomy of the ear and the effects of noise exposure on hearing.
- B. Explanation and purpose of audiometric testing and how often testing will occur.
- C. Purpose, availability, and replacement of hearing protectors.

Safety Tips from the WorkSafe People

- D. Proper selection, use, fit, and care of hearing protectors.
- E. Identification of the facility hearing conservation areas and/or tasks.

Documentation

Training documentation and other hearing conservation records will be maintained by (name or position).

Recordkeeping

Records pertaining to the Hearing Conservation Program (training, audiometric testing, noise control efforts, assessments and monitoring data, etc.) will be kept in the following locations: (list).

OSHA Recordkeeping Requirements

Instances in which an employee has experienced a work-related Standard Threshold Shift (STS) in hearing in one or both ears, and the employee's total hearing level is 25 decibels (dB) or more above audiometric zero (averaged at 2000, 3000, and 4000 Hz) in the same ear or ears as the STS will be recorded in the OSHA 300 Log, the Log of Work-Related Injuries and Illnesses.

Record Retention

Records shall be maintained for the following time frames:

- A. Employee exposure records: duration of employment + 30 years
- B. Audiometric test records: duration of employment + 30 years (these are medical records and must be kept secured and confidential)
- C. Training documentation: duration of employment
- D. Noise assessment and monitoring data: 30 years
- E. Audiometric calibration records:

(In-house testing facilities)

Maintain records of acoustic and exhaustive calibration of audiometers with audiometric testing records for the duration of employee's employment + 30 years.

(For vendor testing)

Date of the last acoustic or exhaustive calibration of the audiometer should be included in the information that you obtain from the testing service. All other calibration data will be maintained by the testing service.

Responsibility

(Name and/or position) shall be responsible for the evaluation of the written program at a frequency of (at least every two years).

Records

Records of the evaluation shall be maintained for a minimum of two years.