



HEARING CONSERVATION

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1.0 PURPOSE

The purpose of this program is to protect university personnel from hearing loss associated with exposure to occupational noise.

2.0 APPLICABILITY AND SCOPE

This program applies to all University employees whose job responsibilities may expose them to noise levels equaling or exceeding 85 dBA for 8-hour shifts (Action Level). Employees exposed to those levels of occupational noise are included in this comprehensive Hearing Conservation Program which includes audiometric monitoring, training, and the use of hearing protection devices.

3.0 APPLICABLE REGULATIONS AND STANDARDS

California: Title 8, General Industry Safety Orders, Sections 5095-5100

Federal: 29, Code of Federal Regulations, Section 1910.95
29, Code of Federal Regulations, Section 1926.101
29, Code of Federal Regulations, Section 1926.52

4.0 RESPONSIBILITIES

Environmental Health and Safety will oversee the administration of the Hearing Conservation Program, but ultimate responsibility for its implementation rests with each department on campus.

4.1 Employee / Student Responsibilities

It is the responsibility of each employee who is affected by this program to:

- Observe the procedures and requirements outlined in this Program;
- Attend training sessions and obtain audiometric testing as required;
- Wear approved hearing protection devices in posted noise hazard areas or as individual tasks require;
- Notify supervisor of changes in the workplace that could change noise exposures.

4.2 Department / Instructor/ Supervisor Responsibilities

It is the responsibility of each supervisor affected by this program to:

- Identify potentially high noise locations and contact Environmental Health and Safety to conduct noise surveys when necessary;
- Ensure that employees use the appropriate hearing protectors in the manner in which wearers have been trained;
- Assure that each employee routinely exposed to 85 dBA or higher, for an 8 hour time weighted average, receive an audiometric examination prior to noise exposure and ensure employee receives an annual audiometric examination thereafter;
- Post areas known to present noise hazards with signs requiring the use of hearing protectors;
- Provide work environments which minimize noise to the greatest extent reasonable;
- Ensure that employees are provided training, audiometric exams and hearing protection devices.

4.3 Environmental Health and Safety Responsibilities

It is the responsibility of the Environmental Health and Safety Department to:

- Assist departments in identifying and monitoring potential high noise areas;
- Assist supervisors with selection of approved hearing protection devices;
- Provide technical assistance and training.

5.0 EXPOSURE MONITORING

EH&S will conduct monitoring of work areas or job tasks suspected of exceeding the action levels described in Section 2.0, with area sound level measurements or personal noise dosimetry. Employees involved in this monitoring will receive written notification of their exposure monitoring results.

6.0 HEARING PROTECTION DEVICES

Campus departments must provide hearing protection to the employees with full shift noise exposures of 85 dBA or higher (82 dBA for 12-hour shifts). Hearing Protection Devices attenuate noise exposure levels to 85 dB or lower.

7.0 AUDIOMETRIC TESTING

The purpose of audiometric testing is to gauge the effectiveness of the hearing conservation and to determine whether the employee has suffered any significant hearing loss. Employees covered by this program will be provided with baseline audiograms and annual audiograms thereafter. Test results will be made available to the employee.

8.0 RECORDKEEPING

Individual departments maintain the audiometric testing records for all persons enrolled in the Hearing Conservation Program. These records are maintained for the duration of the person's employment at USC and are made available to employees upon request. Audiometric records must include the employee's name, job classification, audiogram date, and the date of the last acoustic or exhaustive calibration of the audiometer.

Environmental Health and Safety will maintain employee exposure measurements and training records for at least two years.

9.0 SIGNS AND POSTINGS

Post signs notifying employees that they must wear hearing protection devices in areas where noise levels exceed 85 dBA. Sign should be posted at the entrance to the high noise area.

10.0 TRAINING

Annual training is required for all employees exposed to noise levels at or above 85 A-weighted decibels (dBA) over an eight-hour period. Training includes:

- The effects of noise on hearing;
- The purpose, advantages, and disadvantages of various types of hearing protectors, including their attenuation levels;
- The selection, fitting, and care of hearing protectors; and
- The purpose of audiometric testing.

11.0 PROGRAM APPROVAL AND REVIEW

Date Reviewed: October 5, 2004

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