
Hearing Conservation Program

1.0 Policy Purpose & Scope

The purpose of this Hearing Conservation Program (HCP) is to prevent occupational noise-induced hearing loss among all employees, contractors, and visitors who may be exposed to hazardous noise levels during their work activities. This policy applies to all operations, departments, and job sites under the control of the organization, including temporary workers and subcontractors. The core objective is to identify noise hazards, implement effective engineering and administrative controls, provide appropriate hearing protection, conduct baseline and annual audiometric testing, and deliver ongoing training to ensure every individual understands their role in preserving hearing health.

2.0 Regulatory Context & Compliance

This program is driven by the Workers Compensation Act (WCA) and the WorkSafeBC Occupational Health and Safety Regulation (OHSR), specifically Part 7 – Noise, Exposure Limits, and Hearing Conservation. Key regulatory requirements include:

- (a) OHSR 7.1 – Noise exposure limits (85 dBA Lex for 8 hours);
- (b) OHSR 7.2 – Noise exposure assessment and monitoring;
- (c) OHSR 7.3 – Hearing protection selection and use;
- (d) OHSR 7.4 – Audiometric testing program;
- (e) OHSR 7.5 – Training and education; and
- (f) OHSR 7.6 – Recordkeeping. Compliance with the Canadian Standards Association (CSA) Z94.2 for hearing protectors and CSA Z1007 for hearing loss prevention is also required.

3.0 Roles & Responsibilities

Employer/Management:

- (a) Ensure noise assessments are conducted by a qualified person at least every three years or when processes change;
- (b) Implement engineering and administrative controls to reduce noise to below 85 dBA Lex where practicable;
- (c) Provide a variety of CSA-certified hearing protectors at no cost to workers;
- (d) Establish and maintain an audiometric testing program with a certified service provider;
- (e) Ensure all workers receive initial and annual training on noise hazards, hearing protection use, and program requirements.

Supervisors: (a) Enforce the use of hearing protection in designated noise hazard areas;

- (b) Monitor worker compliance and provide immediate corrective feedback;
- (c) Report any changes in equipment, processes, or work areas that may increase noise exposure;

(d) Ensure workers attend scheduled audiometric testing appointments.

Workers: (a) Wear required hearing protection in all designated areas and during any task exceeding 85 dBA;

(b) Properly fit, maintain, and replace hearing protection as needed;

(c) Participate in annual audiometric testing and training;

(d) Report any hearing difficulties, tinnitus, or concerns about noise exposure to their supervisor immediately.

4.0 Program Execution & Procedures

4.1 Noise

Exposure Assessment: A qualified person shall conduct noise surveys using sound level meters and dosimeters to identify areas and tasks with exposures at or above 85 dBA Lex. Results shall be documented, posted in affected areas, and reviewed every three years or whenever changes occur. 4.2 Engineering and

Administrative Controls: Where feasible, the organization shall reduce noise through equipment substitution, enclosures, barriers, mufflers, and maintenance. Administrative controls such as job rotation, limiting exposure time, and scheduling noisy tasks during low-occupancy periods shall be implemented. 4.3 Hearing

Protection: Hearing protectors with a Noise Reduction Rating (NRR) sufficient to reduce exposure to below 85 dBA shall be provided in multiple styles (earplugs, earmuffs, semi-inserts). Workers shall be fit-tested to ensure proper attenuation. 4.4 Audiometric

Testing: Baseline audiograms shall be obtained within six months of first exposure. Annual follow-up tests shall be conducted by a certified audiometric technician. Results shall be compared to baseline to detect any standard threshold shift (STS). Workers with confirmed STS shall be notified, retrained, and referred for further evaluation. 4.5 Training: All workers exposed to noise at or above 85 dBA shall receive initial and annual training covering: effects of noise on hearing, purpose of hearing protection, proper use and care, purpose of audiometric testing, and their rights and responsibilities under the program. Training records shall be maintained.

5.0 Review & Recordkeeping

Records shall be retained for the duration of employment plus 30 years, in accordance with WorkSafeBC requirements. The following records shall be maintained by the

Safety Department: (a) Noise exposure assessments and monitoring data;

(b) Audiometric test results and STS notifications;

(c) Hearing protection fit-test records;

(d) Training attendance and materials;

(e) Program review and audit reports. The Joint Health and Safety Committee (JHSC) shall review the Hearing Conservation Program annually, or more frequently if there are significant changes to operations, equipment, or regulatory requirements. The review shall assess program effectiveness, compliance rates, audiometric trends, and any recommendations for improvement. The Safety Director shall update the policy and procedures as needed and communicate changes to all affected parties.

Regulatory Disclaimer: This policy is a generic organizational template. The end-user assumes all liability for reviewing and adapting these protocols to meet specific provincial regulations (e.g., WorkSafeBC, OSHA) and corporate requirements prior to formal implementation.