



COUNTY OF NORTHERN LIGHTS

POLICY

NOISE EXPOSURE

CREATED: 2/9/2025

REVISED:

TOTAL PAGES: 4

INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this program is to provide a process to minimize employee-hearing loss caused by excessive occupational exposure to noise at worksites.

SCOPE

This program is applicable to all employees who may be present or exposed in areas to high noise at worksites. When work is performed on a non-owned or operated site, the client's program shall take precedence and shall be abided by. However, this document covers employees and contractors and shall be used on owned premises, or when a client's program doesn't exist or is less stringent. If the company has no control over the noise source at a client location, workers will abide by the client's signage and instruction.

KEY RESPONSIBILITIES

Managers and Supervisors

- Ensure requirements of this program are established and maintained.
- Ensure employees are trained and comply with the requirements of this program.

Employees

- Wear hearing protection when required, attend the training, and cooperate with testing and sampling.

If a noise exposure assessment confirm that employees are exposed to excessive noise at a worksite the company shall have a written procedure to develop and implement a written noise management program that includes policies and procedures.

NOISE MANAGEMENT AND HEARING CONSERVATION PROGRAM

Noise is assessed at the work site and the company provides for the selection, use, and care of hearing protective equipment and worker training. The company must ensure that the noise management program includes a plan to educate workers in the hazards of exposure to excess noise and to train workers in the correct use of control measures and hearing protection, the methods and procedures to be used when measuring or monitoring worker exposure to noise, the posting of suitable warning signs in any work area where the noise level exceeds 85 dBA, the methods of noise control to be used and the selection, use and maintenance of hearing protection devices to be worn by workers.

The company must additionally ensure that the noise management program includes the following:

- the methods of engineered noise control to be used;
- the selection, use and maintenance of hearing protection devices to be worn by workers;
- the requirements for audiometric testing and the maintenance of test records;
- an annual review of the policies and procedures to address the effectiveness of the education and training plan, the need for further noise measurement, and the adequacy of noise control measures.

REQUIREMENTS

- The company shall implement a hearing conservation plan developed and appoint a supervisor to oversee the plan.
- All employees who work in designated high noise areas must wear hearing protection.
- Employees may not be exposed to noise that exceeds exposure limits. The company shall ensure that the exposure of an employee to noise is kept as low as is practical and does not exceed the exposure limits.



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- Workers must not be exposed to noise levels that exceed 82 dBA. Management must ensure that a worker's exposure to noise does not exceed the noise exposure limits in Schedule 3, Table 1 of the Alberta OHS Code and 82 dBA Lex.

ENGINEERING CONTROLS

Engineering controls are used to reduce noise whenever practicable. Where the installation of engineering controls is practical management shall install and use appropriate engineering controls. The company shall reduce worker exposure to noise by implementing the measures indicated hereafter in the following order:

- Reduce the noise at its source;
- Isolate any workstation exposed to the noise; then
- Insulate the work areas acoustically

The company shall ensure that all new places of employment are designed and constructed so as to achieve the lowest reasonably practicable noise level, any alteration, renovation, or repair to an existing place of employment is made so as to achieve the lowest reasonably practicable noise level, and all new equipment to be used at a place of employment is designed and constructed so as to achieve the lowest reasonably practicable noise level.

HEARING PROTECTION

Hearing protectors are used where engineering controls are not practicable to ensure workers are not exposed to noise that exceeds 82 Dba.

The company must ensure that all reasonably practicable measures are used to reduce the noise to which workers are exposed in areas of the work site where workers may be present. Management must ensure that affected workers wear the required hearing protection equipment. Management must ensure that hearing protection equipment provided to workers exposed to excess noise meets the requirements of CSA Standard Z94.2-02, Hearing Protection Devices: Performance, Selection, Care, and Use.

Hearing protection shall be made available to the employee in sizes and configurations that will be comfortable to the employee.

FIT TESTING OF HEARING PROTECTION

Employers must ensure workers are fit tested for the hearing protection devices they use and wear. Fit testing of the devices must meet the updated CSA Standard Z94.2-14 (R2019), Hearing Protection Devices – Performance, Selection, Care, and Use.

Fit testing of hearing protection can be conducted either quantitatively or qualitatively. Quantitative methods are the preferred standard, but these require specialized equipment. Qualitative methods are simpler to perform and rely on the worker's sense of hearing.

NOISE SURVEY

A noise survey is conducted to identify high noise areas. For work performed at a client's location, Management must ensure that employees observe posted noise signage and implement controls as needed. Where the company or an employee has reason to suspect that the noise level in an area where employees work may exceed 80 dBA, the company shall ensure that the noise level is measured and documented by a competent person and the amount of time that an employee spends in an area where the noise level exceeds 80 dBA is measured. Where there is reason to suspect that substantial changes in noise levels have occurred, the company shall ensure that the noise level and employee exposure is re-measured and documented.



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A competent person must evaluate the sources of the noise and recommend corrective actions. The measurements, evaluation and recommendations are to be documented.

To evaluate noise exposure in terms of possible hearing damage, it is necessary to know the overall sound level, the exposure time of the individual in hours per day and the length of time the individual has worked in the area being surveyed. This data shall be supplemented by the following:

- Name of area and location
- Date and time of survey
- Name of person conducting survey
- Description of instrument used, model and serial number
- Environmental conditions
- Description of people exposed

A plot of noise levels must be made for owned facilities. The plot must be filed or posted at the facility. The company shall evaluate hearing protector attenuation for the specific noise environments. The adequacy of hearing PPE shall be re-evaluated whenever noise exposures increase to the point that the PPE provided may no longer provide adequate protection. The company shall then provide more effective PPE where necessary. All sound measuring equipment must be calibrated before and after each survey. Records of sound measuring equipment calibration and noise level surveys conducted at the place of employment shall be kept at the place of employment as long as the company operates.

Sound Level Surveys

- All owned facilities that are suspected of having high noise levels must be screened.

Exposure Surveys

- A representative sampling of employees shall be conducted to determine the exposure to noise over a period of time.
- Noise dosimeters must be capable of integrating all continuous, intermittent, and impulsive sound levels and must be calibrated.

Audiometric Testing

The employer must, at its expense, provide the employee who is exposed to noise that exceed noise exposure limits an initial audiometric baseline test as soon as is reasonably practicable but not later than 6 months after the employee is initially exposed to high noise levels and a further test at least once every 12 months after the initial baseline test.

A qualified third party shall perform all audiometric testing, evaluation, reporting and retesting. Test results shall be supplied to the employee and if required to regulatory authorities and to others as required by local regulatory requirements.

Annual audiograms shall be evaluated as follows:

- Each audiogram shall be compared to the employees' baseline audiogram to ensure the test was valid and to determine if a standard threshold shift has occurred.
- If a standard threshold shift is determined, the employee will be retested within 30 days.
- The retest results will be considered as the annual audiogram.
- Employees shall be informed of their audiometric test results within 30 days of determination.
- If the employee has sustained a standard threshold shift, after retesting, that employee shall be notified and retrained and refitted for appropriate hearing protection and the employee shall be referred for additional medical evaluation if indicated.

RECORDS



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The company must keep records of:

- The annual hearing test results for each worker, which must be kept at the place of employment as long as the company operates.
- Employee audiograms are considered medical/exposure records and shall be kept and treated as confidential and will not be released to anyone without the written permission of the employee or as otherwise required by law.
- The education and training provided to workers.
- Results of noise exposure measurements taken.

ANNUAL PROGRAM REVIEW

The company shall conduct an annual evaluation of the program to ensure that the provisions of the current written program are being effectively implemented and that it continues to be effective.

The company shall regularly consult employees required to use hearing protection to assess the employees' views on this program's effectiveness and to identify any problems. Any problems that are identified during this review shall be corrected. Factors to be assessed include, but are not limited to:

- Hearing protection devices (fit, effectiveness, comfort)
- Monitoring of employee hearing test for threshold shifts in order to re-evaluate specific work areas to see if there is any correlation with conditions and test results.
- Effectiveness of and content of training.
- The employee safety committee shall be involved in the annual review.

EDUCATION AND TRAINING

- Workers are provided training on the hearing conservation program. The employer must ensure that the noise management program includes a plan to educate workers in the hazards of exposure to excess noise and to train workers in the correct use of control measures and hearing protection.
- The employer must provide workers with training in the selection, use, and maintenance of hearing protection equipment required to be used at a work site in accordance with the manufacturer's specifications.
- The employer shall train the employee in the requirement to wear it.
- Training shall be updated to be consistent with changes in the work process and PPE requirements.
- All staff shall have a copy of this program and it shall be posted at the worksite and a copy made available to all employees, their representatives, and regulatory agencies.

Chief Elected Official

Chief Administrative Officer