

# UNIVERSITY OF TOLEDO

SUBJECT: HEARING CONSERVATION PROGRAM

Procedure No: S-08-029

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## PROCEDURE STATEMENT

Employees who are exposed to noise at or above the 8-hour time weighted average shall participate in the University of Toledo's Hearing Conservation Program, which provides participation in the Audiometric Testing Program (Section II), makes available hearing protective devices (Section III), and provides training (Section IV).

## PURPOSE OF PROCEDURE

The Occupational Safety and Health Administration has mandated in its Occupational Noise Exposure Standard, 29 CFR 1910.95, that a Hearing Conservation Plan shall be implemented if employees are exposed to noise levels equal to a 50% allowable dosage (i.e. 85dBA average for 8 hours) measured on the A-scale (slow response).

## PROCEDURE

### I. Monitoring

Monitoring shall be conducted by the Environmental Health and Radiation Safety Department upon request or when evidence suggests that any employee's exposure may equal or exceed an 50% allowable dosage.

- A. This survey will allow for the determination of individuals who will be included in the Hearing Conservation Program as well as for selection of control technologies and of proper hearing protection devices.
- B. Monitoring shall be repeated whenever changes in production, process, equipment, or controls cause an increase in noise exposures, such that:
  1. new employees that are exposed at or above the 50% dosage level; or,
  2. attenuation by hearing protectors becomes insufficient to protect workers.
- C. Employees exposed at or above the 50% allowable dosage level (i.e. 85dBA average for 8 hours) shall be informed of the results of monitoring by the Environmental Health and Radiation Safety Department.
- D. Employees will be offered the opportunity to observe any monitoring conducted in their work area pursuant to this section.
- E. If exposures to noise exceed 50% of the allowable dosage, immediate action will be initiated to reduce exposure levels. If this cannot be readily achieved, employees in the affected department will be placed in the Hearing Conservation Program.
- F. Select community noise areas of concern shall be monitored as needed until sufficient data is collected to discontinue such monitoring.

### II. Audiometric Testing Program (Medical Surveillance)

Audiometric testing is provided to employees whose exposures equal or exceed 50% allowable dosage, or who are subjected to noise levels above 115 decibels. This is available through Northwest Ohio Hearing Clinic, on the Health Science Campus, following the criteria listed below and in accordance with the Occupational Safety & Health Administration Occupational Noise Exposure Standard.

- A. The testing program will be charged to the department and provided at no cost to the employee. It will NOT be billed to the employee's medical insurance.
- B. Managers shall ensure that audiograms are administered to employees within six months of their first exposure at or above the action level to establish a valid baseline audiogram against which following audiograms can be compared.



8	90
6	92
4	95
3	97
2	100
1.5	102
1	105
0.5	110
.25 or less	115

E. Hearing Protector Attenuation

1. The Environmental Health and Radiation Safety Department shall ensure that the noise attenuation of hearing protection devices provided to employees are appropriate for the noise environment in which they are to be used.
2. Hearing protection devices must attenuate employee exposures at least to an 8-hour time weighted average of 85 decibels or below.
3. The noise reduction rating (NRR) of hearing protection devices must be derated by at least 7 when determining the attenuation for an employee.

IV. Training Program

A. The Environmental Health and Radiation Safety Department shall provide a training program for all employees exposed to 50% or more of a maximum allowable dosage (8-hour time weighted average of 85 decibels or greater). Department managers shall ensure employee participation. Training is provided under the following guidelines.

1. The program shall be repeated annually for each employee in the Hearing Conservation Program and all materials used for training shall be made available for employee review.
2. The training program shall be updated to reflect changes in exposures and advances in hearing protection devices.
3. Specifically, the training shall address:
  - a. the effects of noise on hearing.
  - b. the purpose of hearing protection devices, advantages and disadvantages, attenuation information, instructions on selection, fitting, use, and care.
  - c. the purpose of audiometric testing and an explanation of the test itself.
4. Individuals conducting noise monitoring are required to complete an on-line competency on an annual basis unless certified by a national accrediting body.

B. The Environmental Health and Radiation Safety Department shall provide employees with information regarding Occupational Safety & Health Administration Occupational Noise Exposure Standard and shall provide a hard copy of the standard upon request.

V. Record Keeping

Audiogram (medical surveillance) documentation shall be disseminated and maintained as described in Procedure HM-08-016, Environmental/Occupational Monitoring and Medical Surveillance.

Source: Safety & Health Committee

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