

HEARING CONSERVATION

Supplement to Standard Training Module

TRAINING REQUIREMENTS OVERVIEW

This standard Vivid training module provides a general overview of hearing conservation. Employers are required to implement a hearing conservation and training program for all employees exposed to noise at or above the action level of 85 dBA on an eight-hour time weighted average (TWA).

In addition to this general overview, all employees with an occupational noise exposure **must** receive facility-specific information. This additional training **must** cover:

- Effects of noise on hearing
- Purpose of hearing protection and pros, cons and details of the various types
- Purpose of audiometric testing and explanation of the testing procedure

Frequency: Training **must** be completed at the time of initial assignment and annually thereafter. Training information shall be updated to be consistent with changes in protective equipment and work processes.

GENERAL OVERVIEW OF THE STANDARD

PURPOSE: To protect employees from the effects of occupational noise exposure.

OCCUPATIONAL NOISE EXPOSURE – 29 CFR 1910.95

1. **SCOPE:** Applies to all facilities covered under OSHA's Occupational Safety and Health Standards for General Industry.
2. **APPLICATION:** When occupational noise exposure exceeds permissible sound pressure levels indicated in the standard, engineering and administrative controls are required to be assessed. Personal protective equipment (hearing protection) is to be used as a secondary and/or interim control measure to provide employee protection.

3. **HEARING CONSERVATION PROGRAM:** Where employees are exposed to noise at or above the action level of 85 dBA on an eight-hour time weighted average (TWA), a written hearing conservation plan is required specific to the facility's needs.
4. **MONITORING:** When information indicates that any employee's exposure may equal or exceed the action level of 85 dBA TWA, a noise monitoring program is required. The noise sampling strategy must:
 - Cover all areas where employee exposure to noise is anticipated to be above the action level, and identify those employees to be included in the hearing conservation program
 - Include a combination of area and personal sampling that is representative of employee noise exposure
 - Be repeated whenever a change in production, processes equipment or controls increase noise exposures

Monitoring results are required to be provided to all employees exposed to noise in excess of the action level.

5. **AUDIOMETRIC TESTS:** Requirements are stated for annual audiometric tests for employees exposed to noise levels above the action level, including:
 - Qualifications of audiologist
 - Baseline and annual audiogram requirements
 - Evaluation of audiograms
 - Audiogram equipment and mobile van use
 - Follow-up procedures for standard threshold shifts of employee hearing
 - Requirements for audiometric test procedures
6. **HEARING PROTECTORS:** Requirements are stated in this section for evaluation and use of hearing protectors. Employers are required to evaluate appropriate types, styles, and attenuation of hearing protectors for facility noise exposures.
7. **TRAINING:** Requirements are stated for annual employee training, including:
 - The effects of noise on hearing
 - The purpose of hearing protectors, the advantages, disadvantages, and attenuation of various types, and instructions on selection, fitting, use, and care

- The purpose of audiometric testing and an explanation of the test procedures
8. INFORMATION AND TRAINING: Employers shall ensure that all employees with occupational noise exposure participate in a training program. Training must be provided:
- At the time of initial assignment to tasks where occupational exposure to noise exists at or above the action level
 - At least annually thereafter
 - Whenever there are changes to tasks and/or procedures that may affect the employee's occupational noise exposure
9. RECORDKEEPING: Requirements are stated for employer records retention, including:
- Facility noise monitoring data
 - Audiometric tests
 - Employee training records

REFERENCE MATERIALS

Publications

OSHA Hearing Conservation Publication # 3074

can be downloaded at: <http://www.osha.gov/Publications/osha3074.html>

or ordered by calling the OSHA Publication Office at 1-800-321-OSHA (6742)

Website

OSHA Noise and Hearing Conservation website:

<http://www.osha.gov/SLTC/noisehearingconservation/index.html>