

Hearing Protection

This section addresses noise-induced hearing loss and protection in the workplace.

Overview

Any workplace that's operations produce a harmful noise level must institute several safety programs, including (but not limited too) a hearing conservation program, monitoring, audiometric testing program, and training program. To comply with OSHA and federal regulations, employers must establish certain engineering and managerial controls (prior to the use of PPE).

Under the hearing conservation program, monitoring noise levels (decimals) determines an employee's exposure then hearing evaluation is conducted through an audiometric testing program.

Noise Exposure

Following OSHA's table G-16 (see below); an employer must provide accommodations to protect employee's hearing when noise exposure exceeds the given levels.

Duration per day, in hours	Sound level decibels (dB) A slow response
8	90
6	92
4	95
3	97
2	100
1 1/2	102
1	105
1/2	110
1/4 or less	115

If levels exceed those listed, an employer, by law must implement reasonable hearing conservation controls (i.e.; noise reduction tools, noise canceling devices, barriers, etc). An employer failing to reduce to acceptable sound levels must then implement a hearing conservation program.

Hearing Conservation Program

Minimum Requirements for a Hearing Conservation Program:

- Noise monitoring requirements
- Audiometric testing
- Engineering and administrative noise exposure control
- Personal hearing protection
- Recordkeeping
- Training