Risk Management and Safety (RMS)
Occupational Noise Program
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A. SCOPE AND APPLICATION

The Occupational Noise Exposure Program is established in accordance with 29 CFR 1910.95 and describes the program elements necessary to protect employees, students, and visitors from the effects of occupational noise at all University of Nevada, Las Vegas (UNLV) properties.

B. COMPLIANCE WITH PROGRAM

All UNLV employees and student workers, who are exposed to occupational noise at the action level established by the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA).

C. DEFINITIONS

(1) **Action Level** – An 8-hour time-weighted average of 85 decibels measured on the A-scale, slow response, or equivalently, a dose of 50 percent.

(2) **Affected Employee** – A UNLV employee who is exposed at or above an 8-hour time weighted average of 85 decibels.

(3) **Audiogram** – A chart, graph, or table resulting from an audiometric test showing an individual’s hearing threshold levels as a function of frequency.

(4) **Baseline Audiogram** – The audiogram against which future audiograms are compared.

(5) **Decibel (db)** – A unit of measurement of sound level.

(6) **Standard Threshold Shift (STS)** – A change in hearing threshold relative to the baseline audiogram of 10 db or more average at 2000, 3000, or 4000 Hertz in either ear.
(7) **Time-Weighted Average (TWA)** – That sound level, which if constant over an 8-hour exposure, would result in the same noise dose as measured.

**DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES**

(1) **Risk Management and Safety (RMS)**

a. Assess work locations to determine occupational noise sources and exposures.

b. Evaluate engineering and administrative controls implemented by departments to obtain noise reductions.

c. Perform area monitoring of noise producing equipment and machinery.

e. Accomplish individual noise dosimeter sampling, when required.

f. Identify appropriate hearing protection devices.

g. Coordinate the Hearing Conservation Program for affected employees.
   - Develop and provide training for those enrolled in the program.
   - Provide information on scheduling audiometric testing.

(2) **Department Managers and Supervisors**

a. Inform RMS of machinery and equipment that is added or deleted from department inventories.

b. Implement Hearing Conservation Program requirements for affected employees.

c. Apply recommended engineering and administrative controls to reduce exposures.

d. Maintain equipment to reduce occupational noise emissions.
e. Coordinate with RMS to obtain hearing protection training and audiogram testing (department funded) for affected employees and student workers.

f. Provide adequate hearing protection devices to those who are exposed to occupational noise.

g. Verify employees and student workers are using hearing protection properly.

(3) **Hearing Conservation Program Participants**

a. Complete training and audiometric testing.

b. Maintain and wear hearing protection properly.

(4) **Additional Employees, Students, and Visitors**

a. Wear hearing protection devices prior to entering posted areas.

E. **NOISE SURVEYS AND PERSONAL MONITORING**

(1) When noise surveys are required, RMS will coordinate with departments to schedule sound level monitoring.

(2) Representative dosimeter sampling will be performed for equipment registering sound levels of 85 dba or higher.

F. **HEARING CONSERVATION PROGRAM**

(1) If noise levels remain at or above 85 dba TWA, then affected employees and student workers in these areas will be entered into the Hearing Conservation Program and:

a. Be provided with an opportunity to select hearing protection devices from a variety of types.

b. Receive hearing protection training.

c. Be given area monitoring and dosimeter test results.
d. Receive annual audiograms (at no cost to employee or student worker), explanation of results, and notification of standard threshold shifts.

(2) The initial test will be considered the baseline result for the individual. Follow-on test results will be compared with the baseline to determine changes in hearing capability.

G. PART TIME EMPLOYEE

(1) All part time employees are required to wear hearing protection when they are assigned to work in what has been determined to be high noise areas. Audiometric will be made available to those who work in high noise areas.

H. RECORD KEEPING

(1) Noise exposure measurement records shall be retained for two years by RMS. Audiometric test records shall be retained by service provider for the duration of employment for individuals who are entered into the Hearing Conservation Program.

I. CONTRACTORS/SUB-CONTRACTORS

(1) Contractors and sub-contractors whose job assignments require the use of hearing protection while working on UNLV properties shall comply with the requirements specified in 29 CFR 1910.95, *Occupational Noise Exposure* program.

(2) Contractors and sub-contractors shall ensure that UNLV employees are made aware of noise producing activities and that precautions are taken to prevent any harmful effects from the noise generated.

I. ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

(1) The UNLV website contains regularly updated information to include the SCATS Technical Bulletin “Hearing Conservation Program for General Industry.”

Prepared by Risk Management and Safety
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