



HEARING CONSERVATION PROGRAM October 2016

A. SCOPE AND APPLICATION

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

B. COMPLIANCE WITH PROGRAM

This procedure applies to UNLV employees whose job assignments may expose them to noise levels at or above the action level set by Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) standards.

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) **Audiogram** – A chart, graph, or table resulting from an audiometric test showing an individual's hearing threshold levels as a function of frequency.
- (3) **Decibel (db)** – A unit of measurement of sound level.
- (4) **Time-Weighted Average (TWA)** – That sound level, which if constant over an 8-hour exposure, would result in the same noise dose as is measured.

D. DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

- (1) **Risk Management and Safety (RMS)**
 - a. Establish the Hearing Conservation Program for UNLV.

- b. Perform sound level testing and assess work locations to determine occupational noise exposure.
- c. Communicate test and assessment results to pertinent departments and staff and maintain documentation for all assessments performed.
- d. Serve as a resource to departments when they are evaluating and selecting appropriate engineering and administrative controls to reduce noise levels.
- e. Advise on the proper Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) that can reduce sound levels below the action level when engineering and/or administrative controls are not effective or infeasible.
- f. Provide a training course for those in the Hearing Conservation Program and information on audiometric exam test locations.
- g. Maintain and calibrate sound monitoring equipment in accordance with manufacturer's specifications.

(2) Department Managers and Supervisors

- a. Implement the Hearing Conservation Program.
- b. Contact RMS, as needed to:
 - i. Inform RMS when machinery and equipment is added that may produce noise.
 - ii. Request sound level testing and workplace assessments to determine if hazardous noise levels are present.
 - iii. Discuss the use of engineering and administrative controls to reduce exposures.
 - iv. Receive information about hearing protection training and audiometric testing (department funded).
- c. Maintain equipment to reduce noise emissions.
- d. Provide adequate hearing protectors (no cost to employees), if engineering and administrative controls fail to reduce noise exposure below the action level to achieve this result.

- e. Schedule time to allow for the proper cleaning and storage of hearing protectors.
- f. Replace hearing protectors when they become unserviceable or no longer provides adequate protection.
- g. Post hazardous noise locations with appropriate warning signs.
- h. Provide hearing protection to students and visitors entering hazardous noise locations.

(3) Employees

- a. Complete required annual training and audiometric tests (if placed on the Hearing Conservation Program).
- b. Wear hearing protectors properly in areas requiring its use.
- c. Keep hearing protectors clean, in serviceable condition and stored properly.
- d. Inform supervisors when hearing protectors are no longer serviceable so they can be replaced.

(4) Students and Visitors

Wear hearing protectors prior to entering areas requiring its use.

E. NOISE SURVEYS AND PERSONAL MONITORING

- (1) Departments will coordinate with RMS to schedule noise level monitoring.
- (2) Departments will discuss the results with RMS, to determine if engineering or administrative controls are available to reduce exposure.
- (3) If engineering controls and administrative controls fail to provide the needed level of protection, then PPE should be selected.
- (4) Once selected, PPE should be evaluated to verify that it provides the required level of protection.

F. HEARING CONSERVATION PROGRAM

- (1) If personal dosimetry results reveal noise levels at 85 dba or higher Time Weighted Average (TWA), then exposed employees in these areas will be entered into the Hearing Conservation Program, and:
 - a. Receive noise level check information.
 - b. Receive copies of audiometric exams and explanation to include notification of standard threshold shifts.
 - c. Complete annual training and audiometric testing (no cost to employee).
 - d. Select PPE from a variety offered that will bring noise levels below 85 dba.