

Hearing Conservation Sample Written Program



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(OSHCON) Program

Hearing Conservation

Sample Written Program

29 CFR 1910.95



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The following Hearing Conservation Sample Written Program is provided as a guide to assist employers and employees in complying with the requirements of OSHA's Occupational Noise Exposure Standard, [29 CFR 1910.95](#). It contains the basic elements of a Hearing Conservation Plan, but it is not intended to supersede the requirements of the standard. An employer should review the standard for particular requirements that apply to their situation and customize this template to meet the needs of their organization.

Instructions:

Determine the need for a Hearing Conservation Program:

A company probably needs a Hearing Conservation Plan if workers have to raise their voices to make themselves heard while at a conversational distance (two to three feet). If employees are exposed to **eight-hours of time-weighted average (TWA) noise levels of 85 decibels measured on the A scale of a sound level meter (dBA) or more**, OSHA requires companies to have a Hearing Conservation Program. If employees work more than eight hours per day, OSHA lowers the action level using a this formula:

- nine-hours of TWA noise levels of 84 dBA;
- ten-hour of TWA noise levels of 83 dBA; or
- twelve-hours of TWA noise levels of 82 dBA.

Follow these steps to create a program:

This fillable publication is designed as a template to allow employers to customize a Hearing Conservation Program by replacing the blank boxes with their company's name and the responsible individual(s) assigned to meet the OSHA standard. Before creating this plan, read OSHA's Occupational Noise Exposure Standard [29 CFR 1910.95](#).

Disclaimer: Unless otherwise noted, this document was produced by the Texas Department of Insurance, Division of Workers' Compensation using information from staff subject specialists, government entities, or other authoritative sources. Information contained in this fact sheet is considered accurate at the time of publication. For more free publications and other occupational safety and health resources, visit www.txsafetyatwork.com, call 800-252-7031, option 2, or email resourcecenter@tdi.texas.gov.



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Hearing Conservation Sample Written Program

Objective

Date Created:

Date Revised:

The objective of the Hearing Conservation Program is to protect employees from hearing loss caused by uncontrolled exposure to hazardous noise. The program will reduce employee noise exposures and provide appropriate hearing protection where this noise cannot be controlled. The program will also provide training and annual hearing tests to all persons working in areas or with equipment that have noise levels equal to or exceeding an eight-hour TWA sound limit of 85 dBA.

All employees are required to follow the minimum procedures outlined in this program. Any deviations from this program must be immediately brought to the attention of the Program Administrator.

A copy of OSHA's Occupational Noise Exposure Standard, 29 CFR 1910.95, can be obtained by affected employees. A copy of the standard will also be posted in areas with

Assignment of Responsibility

Management

The management of is committed to the safety and health of its workers. Management supports the efforts of the Program Administrator by pledging financial and leadership support for the identification and mitigation of noise hazards. Management will regularly communicate with employees about this program and:

- use engineering and administrative controls to limit employee exposure;
- provide adequate hearing protection for employees;





- post signs and warnings in all high noise areas;
- conduct noise surveys annually or when new equipment is needed;
- conduct annual hearing test for all employees;
- conduct hearing conservation training for all new employees; and
- conduct annual hearing conservation training for all employees.

Program Administrator

The Program Administrator reports directly to upper management and is responsible for conducting the hazard assessments, and the implementation, training, and administration of the program. The Program Administrator will monitor the results of the program to determine needed focus areas. The Program Administrator will also:

- coordinate and supervise any noise exposure monitoring;
- identify employees to be included in the program;
- designate areas where hearing protection must be worn;
- coordinate and supervise audiometric testing;
- develop hearing protection policies;
- supervise hearing protection equipment and needs;
- supervise employee training;
- coordinate and supervise recordkeeping;
- evaluate the program annually; and
- update the program whenever new equipment is introduced.

Supervisors

Supervisor's responsibilities include:

- notifying the Program Administrator if a change in the workplace results in higher noise exposure levels;
- ensuring that employees properly use and maintain their hearing protection; and
- ensuring employees comply with the requirements of this program.

Employees

All employees working in designated noise areas with noise exposures equal or exceeding the action level (85 dBA for an eight-hour shift, 84 for a nine-hour shift, 83 for a ten-hour shift, and 82 for a twelve-hour shift) will be included in the program. A list of identified areas and employees can be found in **Appendix A**.

Employee responsibilities include:

- notifying their supervisor if a change in the workplace results in exposure to higher noise levels;
- using noise control measures as required;
- using approved, company-issued hearing protection in designated high noise areas;
- requesting new hearing protection when needed;
- exercising proper care of issued hearing protection;
- attending all training and audiometric testing; and
- notifying their supervisor of any complicating medical problems as soon as possible.

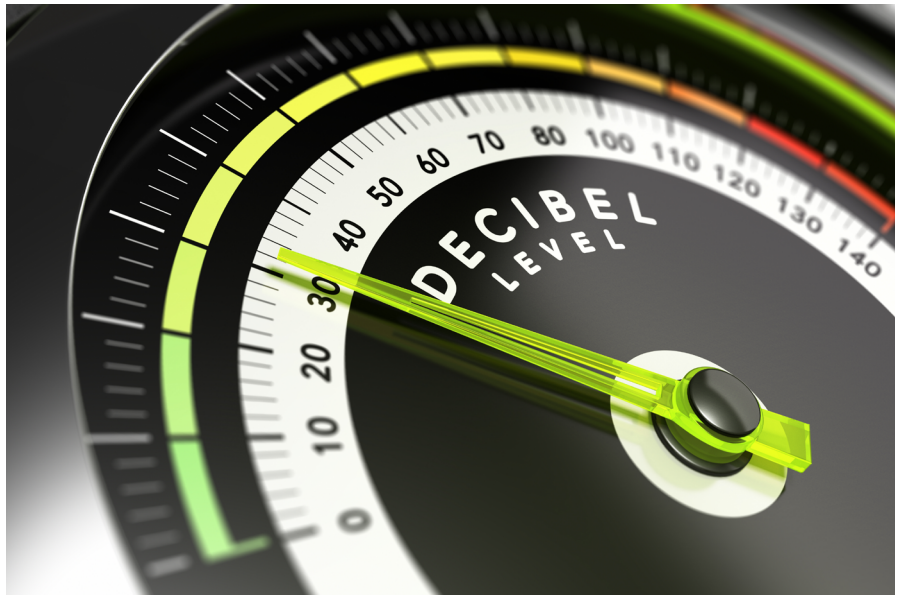
Procedures

Noise Monitoring

Monitoring for noise exposure levels will be conducted by

Noise exposure monitoring will be conducted to:

- determine whether hearing hazards exist;
- determine whether noise presents a safety hazard by interfering with speech communication or recognition of audible warning signs;
- identify employees for noise control efforts and establish hearing protection practices;
- identify specific noise sources that require engineering and administrative controls; and
- evaluate the success of noise control efforts.



The Program Administrator will determine, with the assistance of area supervisors, which areas need monitoring. It is the responsibility of the individual departments to notify _____ when there is a possible need for monitoring. Monitoring will be performed with the use of sound level meters, which determine the noise levels in the employee's hearing zone (near the ear), or with a personal dosimeter, which is a microphone that is usually attached near the collar to record noise levels through a shift. Employees will be allowed to observe or have a representative observe noise monitoring. The selection of monitoring will be performed at the discretion of _____.

The result of the noise exposure monitoring will be recorded on the form in **Appendix B**. All areas requiring hearing protection will be designated on the map included in **Appendix C**.

If the results of any monitoring are equal or exceed the action level (85 dBA TWA), the Program Administrator will:

- notify in writing all employees working in areas at or above the action level;
- provide appropriate hearing protection for exposed employees;
- work with supervisors to ensure hearing protection is worn by employees at all times while in the noise area; and
- investigate and implement feasible engineering and administrative controls to reduce the noise levels.



Noise Control

will use three methods for controlling employee exposure to noise: engineering controls, administrative controls, and hearing protection.

Engineering and Administrative Controls

will first attempt to control existing noise hazards by implementing as many engineering controls as possible. Examples may include purchasing replacement equipment that produces less noise, redesigning existing machinery to produce less noise, or building enclosures to lessen the noise exposure. If engineering controls are not feasible, then administrative controls will be examined. Examples may include reducing exposure through job rotations or extended breaks.

Hearing Protection

When engineering and administrative controls are not feasible or do not eliminate the hazardous noise, hearing protection will be required. In addition, management, supervisors, and employees shall properly wear the prescribed hearing protection while working or traveling through any area that is designated as a high noise area, as listed in **Appendix C**.

Employees will be provided with an appropriate selection of hearing protection free of charge. The selection will include

distinct types: molded earplugs, foam earplugs, and earmuffs. The hearing protection selection must:

- reduce all employee exposures to a level below 85 dBA TWA;
- include various sizes and shapes to fit ear canals; and
- be appropriate for different working conditions which can make hearing protection difficult to wear.

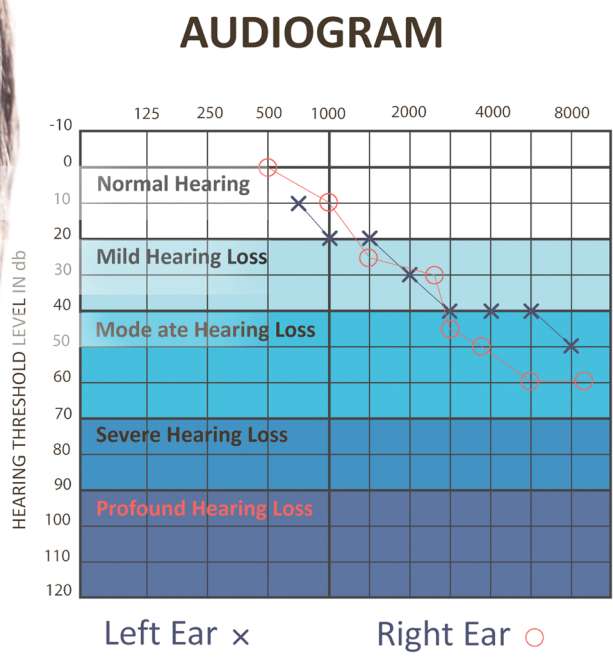


The hearing protection selected and issued to all affected employees can be found in **Appendix D**.

To determine the hearing protection's effective protection level the following formulas will be used.

Non-Required Hearing Protection

Employees who work in areas or at tasks that produce noise levels below the action level will be allowed to wear hearing protection for comfort reasons as long as it does not impact work communication or emergency announcements. The employees' supervisor will determine whether workers can wear their personal hearing protection and will inspect the hearing protection before use. These devices will be supplied by the employer and all use and care will be the responsibility of the employee. If employees choose to wear personal hearing protection for noise below the action level, they are required to attend the Hearing Conservation Program training.



Audiograms/Hearing Tests

Employees in the Hearing Conservation Program who have TWA noise exposures of 85 dBA or greater for an eight-hour work shift will be provided baseline and annual audiometric testing at no cost to determine if a standard threshold shift has occurred. The test will take place within six months of an employee's first exposure at or above the action level and will be conducted by

Annual audiograms will be conducted within one year of the baseline and every year thereafter if an employee continues to be exposed to noise levels at or above the action level. The baseline and annual audiograms will be evaluated to establish a hearing threshold, and annual retests will be compared to the baseline to determine if a standard threshold shift has occurred.

Before an audiometric test can be administered, the employee must have at least 14 hours without exposure to workplace noise

(such as over a weekend) or worn hearing protection for this period. Employees will have access to their monitoring and audiometric testing records.

Employees who have experienced a standard threshold shift will be referred to a clinical audiologist or otologist for further examination. Such referrals may also be made if the audiological contractor suspects that medical problems of the ear have been caused or aggravated by hearing protection.

_____ will comply with all requirements of the OSHA standard on hearing conservation including test location, equipment calibration, and recordkeeping requirements.

Standard Threshold Shift (STS)

Any standard threshold shift will be evaluated by _____'s designated physician to determine if it is work-related. This evaluation will be done at no cost to the employee. If the annual audiogram shows



that an employee experienced a standard threshold shift, a retest may be conducted within 30 days and the results of the retest will be used as the annual audiogram.

If a standard threshold shift has occurred:

- the employee's hearing protection will be refitted;
- the employee will be retrained in the use of hearing protection and provided with hearing protection offering greater safety if necessary.
- The Program Administrator will determine whether the hearing loss should be recorded in the OSHA 300 form.
- The employee will be notified in writing by within 21 days (See **Appendix E**).

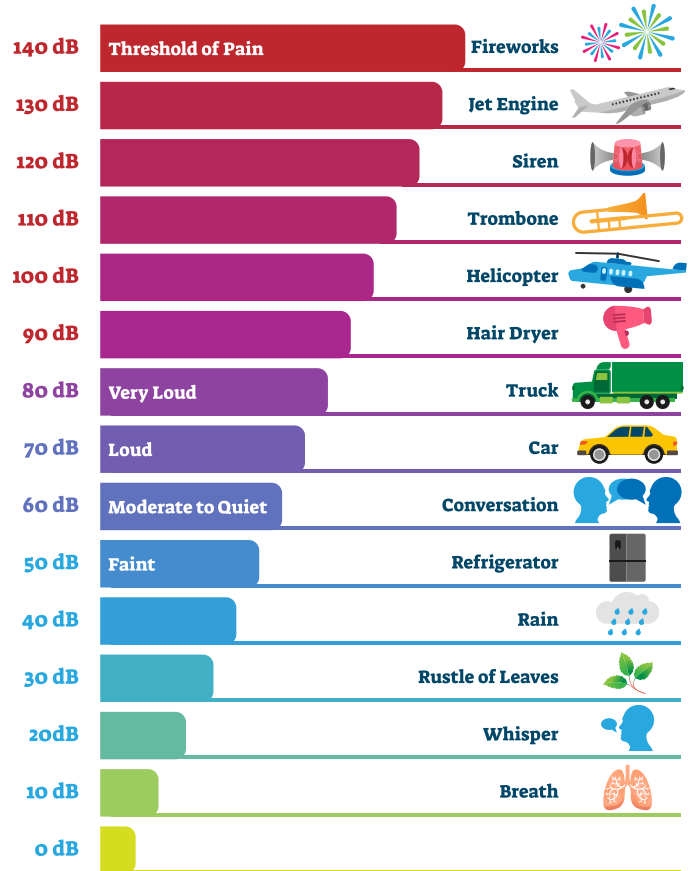
Employee Training

Affected employees will be required to attend training on noise exposure within a month of hire and each year thereafter. The training will be conducted by or a designated representative.

Training topics will include:

- effects of hazardous noise on hearing;
- the purpose of hearing protection;
- advantages and disadvantages of various types of hearing protection;
- instructions on selecting, fitting, using, and caring for hearing protection;
- the locations in the company where hearing protection is required;
- explanation of audiograms and hearing testing;

DECIBEL SCALE



- review of OSHA's Occupational Noise Exposure Standard; and
- company rules and procedures concerning hearing protection and requirements for hazardous noise areas.

The training of each employee will be documented using the Employee Training Record (**Appendix F**) and kept on file. Training records will be maintained by

Periodic Program Review

At least annually, the Program Administrator will conduct a program review to assess the

progress and success of the program. Annual reviews will be documented with the form shown in **Appendix G**.

Outside Contractors

Whenever outside personnel are contracted to work in areas where hearing protection is required, they will be informed of the hearing protection requirements by the Program Administrator or area supervisor. The noise exposure map will be shared with the contractor before any work commences.



Recordkeeping

The following records for the Hearing Conservation Program will be maintained by the Program Administrator:

- noise exposure monitoring – retained for two years;
 - training documentation – retained for seven years;
 - implemented controls – retained for two years;
 - selected hearing protection – retained for two years; and
- audiogram/hearing tests - retained for 30 years after employment termination, which includes:
 - name and job classification of employee;
 - date of the audiogram;
 - examiner's name;
 - date of last acoustic or exhaustive calibration of audiometer; and
 - employee's most recent noise exposure assessment.



Appendix A:

List of Employees Included in the Hearing Conservation Program

Employee Name	Job Title	Inclusion Date



Appendix C:

Noise Exposure Map

Paste Your Own Maps Here



Appendix E:

Standard Threshold Shift Letter

Date:

Dear _____ :

Your most recent audiometric test result was compared to your baseline audiogram. This comparison indicates that you have experienced a significant change in your hearing ability or hearing loss. An audiogram cannot define why you have a hearing loss, but there are many possible reasons such as infection, wax buildup in your ear, or noise. By taking the necessary action now, we can try to stop your hearing loss from getting worse.

Please call

to arrange an appointment with _____ for a medical evaluation to help determine the cause. Remember whenever you are in an identified noise work area, hearing protection must be used.

Please contact the Hearing Conservation Program Administrator if you have any questions.

Sincerely,



Appendix G:

Program Evaluation Checklist

Date of Evaluation	Evaluated by (list all present):	
Written Program Reviewed	Yes	No
Do injury records or audiometric testing indicate a need for additional employee training on the Hearing Conservation Program?	Yes	No
Do any NEW jobs, processes, or areas produce a high noise level? If yes, list:	Yes	No
Is there any record of failure to correct reported hearing or noise problems promptly? Yes No If yes, what action is needed?		
The following content was added/modified/removed from the written program:		
Comments:		



Appendix G (continued)

Questions to ask during the program evaluation:

	Yes	No
Training and Education		
Has training been conducted at least once a year?		
Was the training provided by a qualified instructor?		
Was the success of each training program evaluated?		
Is the content revised periodically?		
Are managers and supervisors directly involved?		
Are posters, regulations, handouts, and employee newsletters used as supplements?		
Are counseling sessions conducted for employees having problems with hearing protection devices or showing hearing threshold shifts?		
Supervisor Involvement		
Have supervisors been provided with the knowledge required to supervise the use and care of hearing protection?		
Do supervisors wear hearing protection in appropriate areas?		
Are disciplinary actions enforced when employees repeatedly refuse to wear hearing protection?		
Noise Measurements		
Were the essential noise studies performed?		
Are the results routinely sent to supervisors and other key individuals?		
Are results included in health/medical records of noise-exposed employees?		
Are results maintained appropriately?		
Are noise measurement results considered when purchasing new equipment, modifying the facility, or relocating employees?		
If there have been changes in areas, equipment, or processes that have altered noise exposure, have follow-up noise measurements been conducted?		
Are appropriate steps taken to include (or exclude) employees in the Hearing Conservation Program whose exposures have changed?		
Engineering and Administrative Controls		
Have noise control needs been prioritized?		
Has the cost-effectiveness of various options been addressed?		
Have employees and supervisors been counseled on the operation and maintenance of noise control devices?		
Are noise control projects monitored to ensure timely completion?		
Are noisy processes conducted during shifts with fewer employees?		
Do employees have sound-treated lunch or break areas?		



Appendix G (continued)

	Yes	No
Audiometry and Recordkeeping		
Has the audiometric technician been adequately trained, certified, and recertified as necessary?		
Do on-the-job observations of the technicians indicate that they perform a thorough and valid audiometric test, instruct, and consult the employee effectively, and keep appropriate records?		
Are hearing threshold levels reasonably consistent from test to test? If not, are the reasons for inconsistencies investigated promptly?		
Are the annual test results compared to the baseline test?		
Is the annual incidence of standard threshold shift greater than a few percent? If so, are problem areas addressed?		
Are audiometric trends identified, both in individuals and in groups of employees?		
Do records show that appropriate audiometer calibration procedures have been followed?		
Are the results of audiometric tests being communicated to supervisors and managers as well as to employees?		
Are employees with a standard threshold shift notified in writing within at least 21 days?		
Referrals		
Are referral procedures clearly specified?		
Are there letters of agreement between the company and consulting physicians or audiologists?		
Do you ensure that employees needing evaluation or treatment receive the service?		
Are records properly sent to the physician or audiologist, and back to the company?		
Hearing Protection Devices		
Has hearing protection been made available to all employees whose daily average noise exposures are 85 dBA or above?		
Are employees allowed to select from a variety of appropriate protection?		
Are employees fitted carefully with attention to comfort?		
Is hearing protection inspected regularly for wear or defects, and replaced immediately if necessary?		
If employees use disposable hearing protection, are replacements readily available?		
Do employees understand how to keep hearing protection clean?		
Have any employees developed ear infections or irritations associated with the use of hearing protection?		
Do workers complain that hearing protection interferes with their ability to do their jobs?		
Do they interfere with spoken instructions or warning signals?		
Are these complaints addressed?		
Are employees encouraged to take their hearing protection home if they engage in noisy non-occupational activities?		



Appendix G (continued)

	Yes	No
Have at-the-ear protection levels been evaluated to ensure that employees are not over or under protected?		
Is each hearing protection user required to demonstrate that he or she understands how to use and care for the hearing protection?		
Administration		
Have there been any changes in federal or state regulations?		
Have the Hearing Conservation Program's policies been modified to reflect these changes?		
Are copies of company policies and guidelines regarding the hearing loss prevention program available in the offices that support the various program elements?		
Are those who implement the program elements aware of these policies?		
Are necessary materials and supplies being ordered with a minimum delay?		
Is the performance of key personnel evaluated periodically?		
If such performance is found to be less than acceptable, are steps taken to correct the situation?		
Has the failure to hear warning shouts or alarms been tied to any accidents or injuries?		
If so, have remedial steps been taken?		