

Hearing Conservation Training

Effective employee training is critical to the success of the hearing conservation program which depends largely on employees to consistently and effectively using hearing protection.

Training must:

-) be conducted at least **annually**, and
-) address the issues listed below.

1. The effects of noise.

A. Employees should be made aware that noise induced hearing loss is permanent and cannot be fixed by surgery or mechanical means. A hearing aid will not effectively overcome the hearing loss.

B. Employees should understand that the noise levels measured in the plant **will cause this type of hearing loss in at least some of the employees**. They should understand that the risk of hearing loss begins as soon as they are exposed to noise, and not only after many years of exposure.

C. Hearing loss occurs without pain to warn the employees of the damage being done to their hearing.

2. Use of Hearing Protectors.

A. Various types of hearing protectors should be demonstrated, and the advantages and limitations of each discussed.

B. Employees should be made aware that hearing protection is only assured if they wear the hearing protectors properly and consistently. Considerable evidence has shown that hearing protectors are often ineffective because they are not used properly.

3. Audiometric Testing.

A. Employees should be informed of the need for baseline and annual audiograms (hearing tests). These are provided at no cost to employees and are administered by a qualified person.

B. Employees will be notified in writing within 21 days if the hearing test shows a standard threshold shift in their hearing. If a standard threshold shift has occurred, employees will be fitted with hearing protectors (if not previously wearing them) or refitted and checked with their existing hearing protectors.

C. As needed, further clinical examinations will be conducted if it appears that wearing hearing protection irritates the ear.

D. Employees should be made aware that hearing tests only document hearing loss *after it has occurred*. *Once a hearing loss has been identified, normal hearing cannot be restored.*