Research
Research Laboratory & Safety Services

Risk Management

UNIVERSITY OF ARIZONA
HEARING CONSERVATION PROGRAM SUMMARY

The University of Arizona Hearing Conservation Program (HCP), a program mandated by OSHA regulation (29 CFR 1910.95), ensures that University of Arizona faculty, students, and staff exposed to hazardous noise levels are adequately protected to prevent hearing loss. This program overview describes the program's key components, including the groups and personnel working together to implement the program and the internal procedures.

1. **Noise Assessments:** University of Arizona health and safety staff work with departments, colleges, and more to identify and monitor work areas and operations where potential exposure to hazardous noise exists. Many facilities-related operations, e.g., steam or chilled water plant, etc.) are areas where noise exposures can approach or exceed the action level of 85dB (8-hour time-weighted average). In addition, in some cases, individual pieces or a set of equipment within a lab or building can present a potential noise hazard for employees depending upon their work in or around this equipment during the workday.

   Risk Management Services (RMS) is ultimately responsible for administering the University of Arizona Hearing Conservation Program. They provide noise assessments, support audiometric testing, and training, and maintain the program and its relevant documents. University of Arizona health and safety staff work with departments, colleges, and more to identify and monitor work areas and operations where potential exposure to hazardous noise exists.

   If hazardous noise is identified, those working in the area or operation must be enrolled into the University of Arizona's Hearing Conservation Program (HCP). Health and safety staff will investigate potential engineering controls to lower noise levels and minimize exposure and other controls such as administrative (e.g., reducing time in high noise areas) and personal protective equipment (e.g., earplugs, muffs). All employees enrolled in the HCP receive baseline testing and personal protective equipment.

2. **Baseline Hearing Exam and Training:** Initial baseline testing and training must occur as soon as possible after exposure to hazardous noise while on the job. At most, employees have six months from their hire date to receive a baseline test from the Occupational Audiometric Testing Clinic. Copies of the baseline test must be maintained in personnel files and maintained by Occupational Health for the duration of the employment and at least two years after.

   Following testing/training, employees will then be tested annually at the Occupational Audiometric Testing Clinic.

3. **Annual Audiometric Testing**: The Occupational Audiometric Testing Clinic will contact employees annually for their OSHA-mandated audiometric test. This should

occur immediately upon hire at the University of Arizona Babcock Building located at 1717 E. Speedway Blvd. Copies of all tests are retained for recordkeeping following CFR 1910.95(k) for the duration of an individual's employment. Following testing/training, employees will then be tested annually. This is conducted following OSHA requirements and to find will also receive training, in accordance with OSHA requirements (29 CFR 1910.95(k)). Training topics covered include;

- ☑ the effects of noise on hearing;
- ☑ the purpose of hearing protection,
- ☑ the advantages/disadvantages and attenuation of various types of protectors,
- ☑ instructions on selection, fitting, use, and care of protectors;
- ☑ the purpose of audiometric testing,
- ☑ and an explanation of testing procedures

After an analysis from a professional audiologist is complete, the UA Occupational Audiometric Testing Clinic will receive a report detailing the audiological findings for each employee enrolled in the program. These reports will be emailed to all employees and supervisors no more than 21 days later. Any results indicating potential occupationally related hearing loss will be referred to the University's Speech, Language, and Hearing Sciences (SLHS) clinics for further evaluation. Supervisors will also be required to complete an Injury Report Form via Risk Management Services (https://risk.arizona.edu/insurance/incident-reporting).

4. **Documented Occupational Hearing Loss:** When test results indicate an occupationally related hearing loss, a workplace assessment will be conducted to ensure adequate noise reduction and hazardous noise controls to prevent further hearing loss. Additionally, supervisors must complete a Risk Management Services injury report, and the employee will receive an SLHS hearing evaluation. The individual(s) with hearing loss will also be provided with retraining on the hearing conservation program components and OSHA regulation. Retraining topics include checking the fit of hearing protection, reeducation of employees, and re-assessing noise levels.

Appendix A

University of Arizona Hearing Conservation Program
The University of Arizona has implemented a Hearing Conservation Program (HCP) to ensure that all employees, staff members, and students exposed to hazardous noise levels are adequately protected to prevent hearing loss. The HCP is designed to comply with, and in many cases exceed, the requirements established by the Occupational Safety and Health Administration's (OSHA) Occupational Noise Exposure Standard (29 CFR 1910.95).

University of Arizona Hearing Conservation Program:
https://arizona.box.com/s/mv24cgx5g1fk8nqihx4hont33ryc0kuv

Risk Management Hearing Conservation Website: https://risk.arizona.edu/occupational-safety/industrial-hygiene/noise-hearing-conservation

Research Laboratory & Safety Services Hearing Conservation Website:
https://research.arizona.edu/compliance/RLSS/hearing-conservation-program

Regulatory Overview:
The employer must administer a continuing, effective hearing conservation program whenever employee noise exposures are at or above an eight-hour time-weighted average (TWA) of **85 dBA** or, equivalently, a dose of 50 percent (29 CFR 1910.95(c)(1)). This is referred to as the action level (29 CFR 1910.95(c)(2)).

Minimum requirements of a hearing conservation program are included in the following sections:

- ☑ Monitoring Program
- ☑ Audiometric Testing Program
- ☑ Hearing Protection Devices (HPDs)
- ☑ Employee Training and Education
- ☑ Recordkeeping

Publications:

OSHA Hearing Conservation Program
OSHA's hearing conservation program is designed to protect workers with significant occupational noise exposures from hearing impairment even if they are subject to such noise exposures over their entire working lifetimes.

This publication summarizes the required component of OSHA's hearing conservation program for the general industry. It covers monitoring, audiometric testing, hearing protectors, training, and recordkeeping requirements**.**

Link: OSHA Hearing Conservation Program Publication

National Institute of Occupational Safety & Health Fact Sheet (NIOSH)
Work-related hearing loss continues to be a critical workplace safety and health issue. Noise-induced hearing loss is 100 percent preventable, but once acquired, hearing loss is permanent and irreversible. Therefore, prevention measures must be taken by employers and workers to ensure the protection of workers' hearing.

Link: Work-Related Hearing Loss