

Noise and Hearing Conservation

Employers whose employees are exposed to excessive noise (e.g., conditions that make normal conversation difficult) may be required to implement a Hearing Conservation program.

- The hearing conservation program requires employers to monitor noise exposure levels in a way that accurately identifies employees exposed to noise at or above 85 decibels (dB) averaged over 8 working hours, or an 8-hour time-weighted average (TWA).
- Audiometric testing monitors an employee's hearing over time. The employer must establish and maintain an audiometric testing program. The important elements of the program include baseline audiograms, annual audiograms, training, and follow-up procedures. Employers must make audiometric testing available at no cost to all employees who are exposed to an action level of 85 dB or above, measured as an 8-hour TWA.
- Employers must provide hearing protectors to all workers exposed to 8-hour TWA noise levels of 85 dB or above. This requirement ensures that employees have access to protectors before they experience any hearing loss.

OSHA Resources

Standards	29 CFR 1910.95
OSHA Webpage	OSHA Safety and Health Topics Page: Hearing Conservation – OSHA Standards
Publications	Hearing Conservation . OSHA Publication 3074 (2002).
Medical Surveillance	<p>1910.95(g); 1926.52† Standard Requirements Pre-placement exam: Baseline audiograms are required within 6 months of exposure at or above 85dB. Mobile test van exception, within one year of exposure at or above 85dB. Periodic exam: Annual audiometric testing required. Termination exam No requirements. Work and medical history: No. Other required tests Initial and annual audiometric testing; see standard re: specific qualifications for the test administrator. Additional tests if deemed necessary: Yes. Written medical opinion: No. Employee counseling re: exam results, conditions of</p>

	increased risk: Yes, if standard threshold shift or suspected ear pathology.
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