

# Hearing Conservation Program

Number: J-8

Revision:

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## 1.0 POLICY

The Town of Carolina Beach has established a hearing conservation program to ensure the hearing protection of employees.

## 2.0 PURPOSE

The purpose of this policy is to ensure that all Town of Carolina Beach employees exposed to noise levels in the workplace are protected based on the OSHA requirements outlined in 29 CFR 1910.95.

## 3.0 SCOPE

This policy applies to all employees who are exposed to noise levels above an eight hour time weighted average (TWA) of 85 decibels.

## 4.0 DEFINITIONS

- 4.1 Hearing Conservation Program – HCP – A program made up of Education, Training, Noise surveys and Hearing Protection.

## 5.0 ORGANIZATION RULES

- 5.1 Employees must be trained regarding the HCP of the Town before performing duties which require hearing protection. The training must be repeated annually.
- 5.2 At a minimum employee training must include the following:
  - A. Effects of noise on hearing
  - B. Purpose of hearing protectors
  - C. Advantages, disadvantages, and protection of various types of hearing protectors
  - D. Instructions on selection, fitting, use and care of protectors
  - E. Purpose of audiometric testes and explanation of test procedures
- 5.3 Exposed employees shall receive a copy of 29 CFR 1910.95 upon request. In addition, Departments with an identified noise level above an eight hour time weighted average of 85 decibels shall post a copy of 29 CFR 1090.95 in the workplace.
- 5.4 The Safety Officer will ensure a noise survey is conducted in suspected high noise areas/equipment and any other areas at the request of a Department Head. If new high noise equipment is brought into the workplace the Safety Officer must be notified so that additional monitoring can be completed.
- Employees have the right to observe sound level noise monitoring. The results of sound level noise monitoring must be provided by the Safety Officer to the Department Head who must distribute the results to all employees who work in an area where the hearing conservation program is in place.
- Employees who must wear noise protection, or limit their exposure due to administrative controls must participate in the Hearing Conservation Program.
- The Safety Officer will notify the Department when hearing protection is required and which employees must wear hearing protection based on the duties the employee performs and the standards outlined in this policy.
- It is up to the Supervisor to ensure that all employees are wearing the proper hearing protection as required.

- Failure by the employee to wear the required hearing protection may lead to Corrective Action being issued to the employee. See policy on **Corrective Action**.

## **6.0 PROCEDURES**

- 6.1 The hearing protection chosen must reduce the noise exposure to at least an eight hour time weighted average of 90 decibels. In order to assure compliance with this standard, hearing protection must be worn by the employee whenever the sound level exposure for the employee routinely exceeds 85 decibels. The noise reduction rating of the hearing protectors must be such that the exposure is 85 decibels or less at all times. If this cannot be met then the administrative controls, such as limiting employee exposure time, will be used to assure that the standard is met.
- Some employees' noise exposure, as measured by noise dosimetry, may indicate that participation in the HCP or the wearing of hearing protection devices is not required. The Safety Officer will notify employees in this category.
- The Town shall provide the proper hearing protection devices based on the employee noise exposure. The employee may be involved in the purchase of the protection device to be worn as long as the Noise Reduction Rating is sufficient to meet this standard.
- The adequacy of the hearing protection being used must be re-evaluated whenever audiometric tests indicate a standard threshold shift or when the noise exposure increases to the extent that the protection is not adequate.
- Audiometric Testing will be completed as follows:
  - A. All employees participating in the HCP must receive an annual audiometric test performed by the Town's Corporate Health Provider.
  - B. All audiometric testing and evaluation must meet the requirements of 29 CFR 1910.95
  - C. The employee being tested must avoid high noise exposure for the 14 hours immediately preceding the audiometric test.
- The following annual training documents shall be maintained by the Department and made available to OSHA for review:
  - A. Training contents
  - B. Name of trainer
  - C. Names of employees attending training
- If the results of Audiometric Testing indicate a standard threshold shift the following must occur:
  - A. The employee with the standard threshold shift must be retested within 30 days and the retest may be considered the annual test.
  - B. The employee must be informed in writing within 21 days of the determination if the retest still indicates a standard threshold shift.
  - C. The employee must be examined by a physician, audiologist, or otolaryngologist to determine if the shift is work related, non-work related, or if it is caused by pathology of the ear.
  - D. If the shift is work related the employee must be retrained, refitted with hearing protection, and a re-evaluation of the protection factor completed.
  - E. The employee may also be referred for a clinical audiological evaluation or an ontological examination, as appropriate. If additional testing is necessary or if a medical pathology of the ear is caused or aggravated by the wearing of hearing protectors. The employee must be informed of the need for an examination if a medical pathology of the ear is unrelated to the use of hearing protection.
  - F. Audiometric test results will reside in the employee's confidential medical file in Human Resources. Audiometric test results must be retained for the duration of employment plus 30 years and be made available to employees, former employees, or their designated representatives.

## **7.0 DOCUMENTATION**

The following must be documented/maintained by the Human Resource Department and made available at the request of OSHA.

- Noise Exposure Measurements
  - A. Procedures followed
  - B. Equipment/areas measured
  - C. Results of measurements
  - D. Calculations
  - E. List of employees who must participate in HCP
  
- Audiometric Records
  - A. Name, age and job classification
  - B. Date of audiogram and name of audiometric technician
  
- Supporting Audiometric Records
  - A. Technicians certification
  - B. Audiometer serial number
  - C. Audiometer calibration records
  - D. Background levels in test room
  
- Audiogram Review
  - A. Audiogram review
  - B. Credentials of audiologist or physician reviewer
  - C. Reviewer's follow up recommendations
  - D. Documentation of standard threshold shift notification to employee
  - E. Documentation of all follow-up activities

## **8.0 APPENDIX/APPENDICIES**

None