



Procedure

Saskatoon & Area - Occupational Health & Safety

Number: 53-006

Title: Physical Hazard: Noise

Saskatchewan Employment Act:

OHS Regulation: 8-1 to 8-6

Date: January 1, 2017

Date Revised/Reaffirmed: December 30, 2021

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Purpose

The purpose of this procedure is to establish the processes to follow to ensure safe work practices to conserve optimal hearing in exposed workers

Definition

- **“dBA”** means the sound pressure level in decibels measured on the A scale of a sound level meter
- **“dBA L_{ex}”** means the level of a worker’s total exposure to noise, in dBA, averaged over an entire workday and adjusted to an equivalent eight hour exposure

Procedure

Manager/Supervisor:

- Design and construct new areas to achieve the lowest reasonably practicable noise level
- When making alterations, renovations, or repairs, ensure the lowest reasonably practicable noise level is achieved. All new equipment must be designed and constructed so as to achieve the lowest reasonably practicable noise level.
- When purchasing new equipment, ensure noise level is considered and the equipment with the lowest noise emission is purchased if appropriate
- Contact OHS or Facilities Management for measurement of sound level if appropriate. If people are near to each other and have to raise their voice when speaking to each other, the noise level may be above 50 dBA.
- Post the noise level in any area where the noise level is 80 dBA or greater
- Where the exposure is between 80 and 85 dBA L_{ex}, inform the workers of the hazards, make available hearing protection if requested by the workers, and train the workers in the selection, use, and maintenance of the hearing protectors.
- Where the exposure is 85 dBA or greater, inform the workers of the hazards and take Preventative and Protective Measures to manage the hazard, such as:
 - Determine whether the noisy equipment, process or material is required or whether changes can be made to eliminate or decrease the noise
 - Use sound absorbing material under equipment, or enclosures around equipment
 - Regular maintenance of equipment
 - Separating the hazardous process or equipment in a different room
 - Scheduling the process at a time where fewer people are present

- Reducing the number of items of loud equipment
- Reducing the number of equipment operating at one time
- Arrange work to reduce the exposure time
- Document steps taken
- Where the exposure is 85 dBA L_{ex} or greater, and it is not possible to decrease the exposure to less than 85 dBA L_{ex} , provide written reasons to the Occupational Health Committee why the manager believes that the exposure level cannot be reduced sufficiently
- Where the exposure is 85 dBA L_{ex} or greater, provide hearing protection to the workers, train them in the selection, use and maintenance of the hearing protection
- Provide supervision to ensure that workers are compliant or determine reasons for non-compliance and resolve concerns
- Provide time off work, without loss of pay, to attend audiometric testing
- Where 10 or more workers are exposed to levels greater than 85 dBA L_{ex} , develop a hearing conservation plan, make available to workers, and review every 3 years

Worker:

- Where the exposure is between 80 dBA L_{ex} and 85 dBA L_{ex} , request hearing protection if desired
- Where the exposure is 85 dBA L_{ex} or greater, wear the hearing protection provided, ensuring that it is inserted or worn correctly and maintained correctly, if not disposable. Attend an audiometric test every 2 years.
- If experiencing symptoms of noise exposure, report to the Safety Alert System/Incident Reporting Line. Symptoms might include ringing or buzzing in your ears, if sounds seem dull or flat after leaving a noisy area.

Non-Compliance/Breach:

Non-compliance with this policy will result in a review of the incident. A review for non-compliance may result in disciplinary action, up to and including termination of employment or privileges; fines and /or prosecution of individuals under the Saskatchewan Employment Act and OHS Regulations.

References

- NIOSH, How to wear earplugs: <http://www.cdc.gov/niosh/mining/content/earplug.html>
- NIOSH, Noise and Hearing Loss Prevention: <http://www.cdc.gov/niosh/topics/noise/default.html>
- NIOSH, How can I test my hearing: <http://www.cdc.gov/niosh/mining/content/quickfitweb.html>

Review Dates:

January 1, 2017

May 28, 2018

December 30, 2021