

Title:	<b>Hearing Conservation</b>	
Purpose:	To establish a hearing conservation program for City employees in accordance with the Hawaii Occupational Safety and Health Law.	
Issued by:	Industrial Safety and Workers' Compensation	Date: August 1, 2019
References:	Hawaii Administrative Rules (HAR), Title 12, Chapter 60-50 which incorporates Federal Standard 29 CFR 1910.95 (Occupational Noise Exposure)	

## I. **POLICY**

The City and County of Honolulu (City) will administer a continuing and effective Hearing Conservation Program to prevent noise-induced hearing loss to employees whenever employee noise exposures equal or exceed an 8-hour time-weighted average (TWA) sound level of 85 decibels (dBA) measured on the A scale (slow response), or, equivalently, a dose of 50 percent. The Hearing Conservation Program shall comply with OSHA 29 CFR 1910.95, Occupational Noise Exposure.

## II. **APPLICABILITY**

This policy is applicable to all City departments and agencies. Each City department or agency is responsible to ensure they comply with OSHA 29 CFR 1910.95, Occupational Noise Exposure.

## III. **RESPONSIBILITIES**

Specific responsibilities for the Hearing Conservation Program are established as follows:

### A. Department of Human Resources (DHR)

1. Review and update the Hearing Conservation Policy as necessary.
2. Advise and assist departments and agencies in the implementation of their hearing conservation programs.
3. Review and approve or disapprove all requests for hearing protection devices.
4. Periodically review department and agency hearing conservation programs for compliance with OSHA 29 CFR 1910.95, Occupational Noise Exposure.

### B. Departments and Agencies

Comply with the provisions of OSHA 29 CFR 1910.95, Occupational Noise Exposure standard and develop Hearing Conservation Programs as necessary to include:

1. **Monitoring.** Conduct initial noise monitoring surveys of all work areas and operations to identify those areas and operations where noise is a hazard and the employees at risk in these areas. Repeat monitoring whenever a change in production, process, equipment, or controls may increase employee noise exposure.

2. Engineering and administrative controls. Provide engineering and administrative controls, when feasible, to reduce employee noise exposure to acceptable levels by: a) utilizing various methods of insulation or isolation; b) revising operational procedures and modifying, replacing or eliminating noisy equipment; and/or c) revising employee work schedules and procedures.
3. Employee notification. Notify each employee exposed at or above an 8-hour TWA of 85 dBA of the results of the monitoring. Post warning signs in areas where noise is a hazard.
4. Observation. Provide the affected employees and/or their representatives an opportunity to observe noise measurements conducted under this program.
5. Audiometric testing. Place employees exposed to noise levels exceeding 85 dBA on an 8-hour TWA, into a Hearing Conservation Program via the Honolulu Emergency Services Department (HESD), Health Services. Provide annual audiometric testing in coordination with Health Services to all employees exposed to noise levels at or above the 8-hour TWA of 85 dBA.
6. Hearing protectors. Provide hearing protectors to all employees exposed to noise levels at or above the 8-hour TWA of 85 dBA or where noise levels exceed 90 dBA. A variety of suitable hearing protectors shall be available for employees to select from. Coordinate with the DHR Industrial Safety Branch for approval prior to purchasing hearing protectors.
7. Hearing protector attenuation. Ensure that hearing protectors attenuate employee exposure at least to an 8-hour TWA of 90 dBA. Also, ensure that hearing protectors for employees, who have experienced a standard threshold shift, attenuate exposures to an 8-hour TWA of 85 dBA or below.
8. Training program. Provide initial and annual training to all employees exposed to noise at or above an 8-hour TWA of 85 dBA. The training shall include the following:
  - a) the effects of noise on hearing;
  - b) the purpose of hearing protectors, the advantages, disadvantages and attenuation of various types, and instructions on selection, fitting, use and care of hearing protectors; and
  - c) the purpose of audiometric testing and an explanation of the test procedures.
9. Record keeping. Maintain an accurate record of all employee exposure measurements. Make available noise exposure records upon request by employees, former employees, employee representatives, and HIOSH.
10. Access to information and training material. Establish a written Hearing Conservation Program and make it available to employees and their representatives.

### **C. Honolulu Emergency Services Department, Health Services**

Establish and maintain an audiometric testing program to comply with OSHA 29 CFR 1910.95, Occupational Noise Exposure standard for employees exposed to noise levels at or above the 8-hour TWA of 85 dBA.

1. Provide and evaluate baseline and annual audiograms.
2. Maintain records of audiometric tests.
3. Provide audiometric testing equipment and maintain an audiometric test room that meets the requirements of OSHA 29 CFR 1910.95, Occupational Noise Exposure standard.
4. Recommend type and size of hearing protection for employees examined under this program.
5. Make available audiometric test records upon request by employees, former employees, employee representatives, and HIOSH.

### **D. Supervisors**

1. Set an example by making full use of hearing protection when entering areas where noise is a hazard.
2. Ensure that all employees make full use of hearing protection when entering areas where noise is a hazard.
3. Enforce employee compliance with this program. Disciplinary measures should be initiated for employee noncompliance.
4. Maintain an up-to-date listing of employees exposed to noise levels at or above an 8-hour TWA of 85 dBA.
5. Ensure employees report for scheduled audiometric testing.

### **E. Employees**

1. Report promptly for scheduled audiometric testing.
2. Make full use of hearing protection provided when entering areas or working with equipment where noise is a hazard.
3. Maintain hearing protection devices in a sanitary and proper working condition.
4. Report defective, damaged, or unserviceable hearing protectors to the supervisor for replacement.