



# Hearing Conservation Program

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## I. POLICY

The purpose of the Hearing Conservation Program is to minimize occupational hearing loss by providing hearing protection, training, and annual hearing tests to all persons working in areas or with equipment that have noise levels equal to or exceeding an eight- hour time-weighted average (TWA) of 85 dBA (decibels measured on the A scale of a sound level meter). A copy of this program will be maintained by all affected departments. A copy of OSHA's Hearing Conservation Standard, California Code of Regulations, Title 8, Article 105, Section 5097, can be obtained from the City of Redlands ("City") Risk Management Specialist. A copy of the standard will also be posted in areas with affected employees.

## II. AUTHORITY

California Code of Regulations, Title 8, Article 105, Sections 5095 to 5100

## III. SCOPE

This program applies to employees and supervisors working in areas or with equipment that have noise levels equal to or exceeding an eight-hour time-weighted average (TWA) of 85 dBA (decibels measured on the A scale of a sound level meter).

## IV. DEFINITIONS

- A. **Audiogram**- a chart, graph, or table resulting from an audiometric test showing an individual's hearing threshold levels as a function of frequency.
- B. **Baseline audiogram**- the audiogram against which future audiograms are compared.
- C. **Decibel (dB)**- unit of measurement of sound level.
- D. **dBA (Decibels-A-Weighted)**- a unit of measurement of sound level corrected to the A-weighted scale, as defined in ANSI S1.4-1971 (R1976), using a reference level of 20 micro pascals.
- E. **Medical Pathology**- a disorder or disease. For purposes of this program, a condition or disease affecting the ear, which should be treated by a physician specialist.
- F. **Sound level**- ten times the common logarithm of the ratio of the square of the measured A-weighted sound pressure to the square of the standard reference pressure of 20 micro pascals.
- G. **Sound level meter**- an instrument for the measurement of sound level.

## V. RESPONSIBILITIES

### RISK MANAGEMENT

- A. Prepare and maintain a written program which complies with the requirements of Cal/OSHA Title 8, Article 105, Sections 5095 to 5100;

- B. Provide training to all potentially impacted employees and their supervisors on the risks and prevention of occupational hearing loss, including how to recognize symptoms and respond when they appear;
- C. Conduct or coordinate personal noise dosimetry to determine time-weighted average (TWA) exposures for individuals and departments;
- D. Assist departments in developing methods for noise abatement, reduction or control;
- E. Provide recommendations to departments regarding purchase of personal protective devices;
- F. Establish and conduct an audiometric testing program for affected employees, providing consultation and notification of exam results;
- G. Maintain and make available records of exposure measurements and audiometric tests;
- H. Maintain training records; and
- I. New employees shall be sent to Central Occupational Medicine Providers (COMP) Clinic for a baseline audiogram during pre-employment assessment.

#### DIRECTORS, MANAGERS, AND SUPERVISORS

- A. Ensure that noise control is considered when procuring equipment, machinery, and tools;
- B. Identify work areas that may overexpose employees to harmful levels of noise and notify Risk Management for testing and development of remediation strategy;
- C. Implement agreed remediation strategy for noise abatement, reduction or control;
- D. Train or arrange training for employees covered by the Hearing Conservation Program; ensure that they read, understand and comply with all appropriate procedures.
- E. Ensure that appropriate personal protective equipment is provided to affected employees; enforce the use of such devices when required; ensure that such devices are kept in good repair and maintained in a sanitary manner.
- F. Should an incident occur, complete a Report of Employee Injury or Incident form and any additional documentation needed to investigate work related injuries and illnesses.

#### AFFECTED EMPLOYEES

- A. Use City approved hearing protection in designated high noise areas;
- B. Request new hearing protection when needed;
- C. Exercise proper care of issued hearing protection; and
- D. Notify manager or supervisor of any changes to hearing.

### **VI. PROGRAM**

#### NOISE MONITORING

- A. Monitoring of noise exposure levels will be conducted by City personnel or a competent third party. It is the responsibility of the individual departments to notify Risk Management when there

is a possible need for monitoring. Monitoring will be performed with the use of sound level meters and personal dosimeters at the discretion of Risk Management.

- B. Monitoring will also be conducted whenever there is a change in equipment, process or controls that affect the noise levels. This includes the addition or removal of machinery, alteration in building structure, or substitution of new equipment in place of that previously used. The responsible supervisor must inform Risk Management when these types of changes are instituted.

#### EMPLOYEE TRAINING

- A. Affected employees will be required to attend training concerning the proper use of hearing protection. The training will be offered via NeoGov within a month of hire and annually thereafter.
- B. Training shall consist of the following components:
  1. How noise affects hearing and hearing loss;
  2. Review of the OSHA hearing protection standard;
  3. Explanation of audiometric testing;
  4. Rules and procedures; and
  5. How to use and care for hearing protectors.

#### HEARING PROTECTION

Management, supervisors, and employees shall properly wear the prescribed hearing protection while working or traveling through any area that is designated as a high noise area.

- A. Hearing protection will be provided at no cost to employees who perform tasks designated as having a high noise exposure and replaced as necessary. It is the supervisor's responsibility to require employees to wear hearing protection when noise levels reach or exceed 85 dBA. Those employees will have the opportunity to choose from at least two different types of hearing protection.
- B. Personal stereo headsets are not approved for hearing protection and are not permitted in any operating area of City property.
- C. Signage is required in areas that necessitate hearing protection. It is the responsibility of supervisors to provide signage to the appropriate areas.
- D. Preformed earplugs and earmuffs should be washed periodically and stored in a clean area. Foam inserts should be discarded after each use. Hands should be washed before handling preformed earplugs and foam inserts to prevent contaminants from being placed in the ear.

#### AUDIOGRAMS/HEARING TESTS

- A. Employees subject to the Hearing Conservation Program who have time-weighted average (TWA) noise exposures of 85 dBA or greater for an eight-hour work shift will be required to have both a baseline and annual audiogram. The audiograms will be provided by the City and conducted by Central Occupational Medicine Providers (COMP) Clinic with no cost to the employee.

- B. The baseline audiogram will be given to an employee within one month of employment with the City and before any exposure to high noise levels. Annual audiograms will be performed within one year from the date of the previous audiogram. It is the responsibility of the individual and Risk Management to schedule the annual audiogram.
- C. If an annual audiogram shows that an employee has suffered a standard threshold shift, the employee will be retested within 30 days of the annual audiogram. If the retest confirms the occurrence of a standard threshold shift, the employee will be notified in writing within 21 days of the confirmation. Employees who do experience a standard threshold shift will be refitted with hearing protection and provided with more training on the effects of noise. An employee may be referred for a clinical audiological evaluation or an ontological examination, as appropriate, if additional testing is necessary or if the employer suspects that a medical pathology of the ear is caused or aggravated by the wearing of hearing protection.

## CONTRACTORS

- A. Contractors who perform work on City property must adhere to the City's Hearing Conservation Program. It is the responsibility of the Project Manager to ensure these procedures are conducted.
- B. Contractors must also make a copy of their Hearing Conservation Program available to Risk Management for review.
- C. Contractors are expected to always enforce these guidelines while performing work for the City.
- D. If there is a conflict in procedures between Contractor and City programs, notification will be sent to Risk Management for support.
- E. Contractors with an insufficient program will not be allowed to begin work until their program meets or exceeds the requirements of this program.

## VII. RECORDKEEPING

All training records prepared in association with the Hearing Conservation Program will be maintained by the Office of Human Resources/Risk Management.

## VIII. ADDITIONAL REFERENCES

<https://www.dir.ca.gov/title8/5097.html>

## Acknowledgment of Receipt

I, \_\_\_\_\_  
(Print First & Last Name) acknowledge by signing this document that I have received and

reviewed the City of Redlands Hearing Conservation Program and understand that it contains valuable information on the City's policies and procedures regarding employee safety as it pertains to noise exposure in the course of my job duties. My responsibilities, as specified by the program, are to:

- Use City approved hearing protection in designated high noise areas;
- Request new hearing protection when needed;
- Exercise proper care of issued hearing protection; and
- Comply with all policies as governed by the Hearing Conservation Program.

Furthermore, I acknowledge that failure to comply with these procedures may lead to disciplinary action.

If you have any questions regarding this document, please contact your immediate Supervisor or the Human Resources Department.

Signature \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
Employee Name (Please PRINT)