

## **HEARING CONSERVATION PROGRAM**

### **#325**

**1.0 POLICY.** It is the policy of Davis County to protect employees from hearing loss resulting from occupational noise exposure through a continuing, effective, and comprehensive hearing conservation program. Conservation of hearing is an important preventative measure. To reduce occupational hearing loss, all employees, who work in potentially noisy areas, are provided hearing protection, training and annual hearing tests. OSHA's hearing conservation standard is covered in 29 CFR 1910.95.

**1.1 PURPOSE.** The purpose of the Hearing Conservation Program outlined here is to help assure that employees of Davis County are at all times protected against potentially damaging levels of noise. The County's primary means of reducing or eliminating employee exposure to hazardous noise is through engineering and administrative controls. When these controls are not feasible, hearing protective devices must be utilized. Appropriate hearing protection will be provided in any situation in which it is recognized that noise levels exceed limits established by the Occupational Safety & Health Administration (OSHA).

**2.0 RESPONSIBILITIES.** The Personnel Director shall provide policy guidance and coordination on hearing conservation matters and serve as the principal point of contact with Federal and State regulatory agencies that control occupational exposure to hazardous noise. The Personnel Director may delegate functions relating to the implementation of the plan to other individuals.

**2.1 ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICERS.** It is the responsibility of Administrative Officers to provide for the following:

- A. Use engineering and administrative controls to limit employee exposure.
- B. Provide adequate hearing protection for employees.
- C. Post signs and warnings for all high noise areas.
- D. Conduct noise surveys annually or when new equipment is added.
- E. Provide annual hearing tests for affected employees.
- F. Conduct hearing conservation training for affected new employees.
- G. Conduct annual hearing conservation training for affected employees.

**2.2 EMPLOYEES.** It is the responsibility of employees to:

- A. Use County provided, approved hearing protection in designated high noise areas.
- B. Request new hearing protection when needed.
- C. Exercise proper care of issued hearing protection.
- D. Attend hearing conservation training classes.
- E. Participate in testing when in an affected position.

**3.0 ENGINEERING CONTROLS.** After it is determined that noise exposure above 85 dB(A) are present, engineering controls should be evaluated and implemented to reduce the noise exposure before administrative controls are initiated. When new equipment or machinery is evaluated for purchase, the equipment should be inspected and researched from a safety and health standpoint. One criteria of the evaluation should include the amount of noise the equipment will produce and how it will affect the overall noise exposure. Some examples of engineering controls include: noise reducing baffles; compartmentalization, installing noise reducing gears, and installing rubber pads under machinery.

**4.0 ADMINISTRATIVE CONTROLS.** After engineering controls are evaluated for effectiveness or feasibility, administrative controls should be considered to reduce noise exposure. Administrative controls include restricting exposure time or using personal protective equipment (PPE). Personal Protective Equipment, such as ear plugs or muffs, may be used to reduce the amount of noise exposure. Each plug or muff has a noise reductions factor (NR) as evaluated by ANSI Standards (S3.19 - 1974 or Z24.22 - 1957). For example, if a work area has an ambient noise exposure of 96 dB(A), the hearing protectors should be rated 6 NR or better to be effective.

**5.0 HEARING PROTECTORS.** According to OSHA Regulations, each location with noise exposures of 85 to 89 dB(A) will provide hearing protectors for the Employee's optional use. Noise exposures at 90 dB(A) or above require the mandatory use of hearing protection.

**5.1** All employees shall properly wear a prescribed hearing protector while working in or traveling through any section of a location that is designated a High Noise Area. The following rules will be enforced:

- A. Personal stereos, such as Walkmans, etc., will not be permitted in any High Noise Area.
- B. Hearing protectors, at least two types of plugs and one type of muffs, will be provided and maintained by County.

- C. Hearing protectors and replacements will be provided free of charge.
- D. Hearing protectors will be properly worn at all times, except in offices, break rooms, rest facilities.

**6.0 REQUIRED TESTING FOR POSITIONS REQUIRING HEARING PROTECTION.** Baseline testing will be performed for all affected employees with the implementation of this program. Employees hired into affected positions will receive baseline testing at commencement of employment. Annual tests will be performed thereafter during the employee's birth month. Testing will also be performed at termination of employment.

**6.1 POSITIONS REQUIRING TESTING.** Positions that exceed acceptable noise standards and that are subject to Hearing Conservation Program requirements are:

- A. Shooting Range Officers.
- B. Public Works Equipment Operators.

**7.0 NOISE MONITORING.** Workers Compensation Fund of Utah will be used to perform noise monitoring. Testing will be performed annually, rotating locations on a regular basis and also at the request of departments. The results of these reports will be used to establish which positions at the County qualify under OSHA standards for participation in the Hearing Conservation Program.

**8.0 HEARING CONSERVATION PLAN DOCUMENT.** The plan document is available for review in the Office of Personnel Management during business hours. It contains information used to develop this policy. In addition the OSHA standard shall be posted in all industrial noise-hazardous areas.