

# eplica Safety Lines

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## Hazardous Noise

The Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) states that approximately 30 million workers are exposed to hazardous noise in the workplace annually. The incidence of noise-induced hearing loss can be reduced or eliminated through the successful application of engineering and administrative controls and hearing conservation programs. The implementation of engineering controls and administrative programs is the principal means employers have to comply with regulations and must be implemented before PPE (e.g., hearing protectors) is used.

### When is it necessary to implement a noise protection program?

It is not necessary for every employer to measure workplace noise. Noise monitoring or measuring must be conducted only when exposures are at or above 85 dB during an eight-hour workday. Factors suggesting noise exposures in the workplace may be at this level include employee complaints about the loudness of noise, indications that employees are losing their hearing or there are noisy conditions which make normal conversation difficult. The employer should also consider any information available regarding noise emitted from specific machines. In order to determine if exposures are at or above this level, it may be necessary to measure or monitor the actual noise levels in the workplace, and to estimate the noise exposure or "dose" received by employees during the workday.

### How is noise measured?

The hearing of workers exposed to noise can be monitored through regular audiometric examinations. Audiometric testing is when a person's hearing threshold levels are measured by monaural pure tone air conduction threshold tests. While testing is not a preventive mechanism in itself, and is only relevant in the context of a comprehensive hearing conservation program, it is an important part of managing the risks from noise exposure at the workplace. Any changes in a person's hearing levels revealed by audiometric testing should be investigated as to their cause(s) and the need for corrective action. An audiometric testing program should be available to any worker likely to be regularly at risk from exposure to excessive noise levels at work.

### Who can perform audiometric testing?

Audiometric tests shall be performed by a licensed or certified audiologist, otolaryngologist or other physician, or by a technician who is certified by the Council for Accreditation in Occupational Hearing Conservation, or who has satisfactorily demonstrated competence in administering audiometric examinations, obtaining valid audiograms and properly using, maintaining and checking calibration and proper functioning of the audiometers being used. A technician who performs audiometric tests must be responsible to an audiologist, otolaryngologist or physician.

### How often is it necessary to monitor noise levels?

When there are significant changes in machinery or production processes that may result in increased noise levels, remonitoring must be conducted to determine whether additional employees need to be included in the hearing conservation program. Many companies choose to remonitor periodically (once every year or two) to ensure that all exposed employees are included in their hearing conservation programs.

### What does an effective hearing conservation program consist of?

OSHA has determined that an effective hearing conservation program consists of the following elements:

- (1) Monitoring of employee noise exposures
- (2) The institution of engineering, work practice, and administrative controls for excessive noise
- (3) The provision of each overexposed employee with an individually fitted hearing protector with an adequate noise reduction rating
- (4) Annual employee training and education regarding noise hazards and protection measures for each employee included in the hearing conservation program
- (5) Baseline and annual audiometry testing
- (6) Procedures for preventing further occupational hearing loss by an employee whenever such an event has been identified
- (7) Recordkeeping

If an employer feels their noise levels might be high, it is always safe to complete audiometric testing and document findings. For more information on hearing conservation exposure and compliance standards please select the following link: [Occupational noise exposure - 1910.95](http://www.eplicaservices.com/occupational-noise-exposure-1910.95)



## April Safety Tip:

The human foot is rigid enough to support the weight of your entire body, and yet flexible enough to allow you to run, dance, play sports, and to take you anywhere you want to go. Without your feet and toes, your ability to work at your job would be greatly reduced.

The importance of **foot protection** on the job is revealed by the injury statistics. Each year, there are tens of thousands of disabling workplace foot injuries, plus many more to toes.

OSHA requires protective footwear (29 CFR 1910.136) whenever employees are "working in areas where there is a danger of foot injuries due to falling or rolling objects, or objects piercing the sole, and where such employee's feet are exposed to electrical hazard."

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# Machine Operation 101



gloves, footwear.)

### Inspect Machines and Equipment

- ▶▶ Inspect machinery before use. Check guards, belts, hoses and electrical cords.
- ▶▶ Never operate a malfunctioning machine or one with a missing or circumvented guard.

### Get Training

- ▶▶ Be sure you are trained before working with machines. Ask questions so that you are more aware of hazards and how to protect yourself.

### Follow Lockout / Tagout Procedures

- ▶▶ Never operate a machine that has been locked / tagged out.
- ▶▶ Always lockout / tagout a machine that is not functioning properly.
- ▶▶ Make your fellow co-workers aware that the machine has been tagged and locked out and not to use it.
- ▶▶ Notify your supervisor immediately.

### Never Try to Perform Maintenance on Machinery

- ▶▶ Never perform maintenance on equipment unless authorized.

*Someone with a good safety attitude operates machinery safely.*

### Consider the Hazards

- ▶▶ Before operating machinery, consider the hazards. What could happen to your hands if they were placed at the point of operation?
- ▶▶ Does the machine spit out material that could hit your eyes?
- ▶▶ Is the machine operated with high voltage, pneumatics or hydraulics?

### Wear PPE

- ▶▶ Wear the personal protective equipment specified by operating procedures or your supervisor. (i.e., safety glasses, face shields,

## OSHA Budget Blueprint Announced

The initial budget plan suggested by the Obama administration points to increased funding for OSHA.

Although it does not cite specifics, the budget proposal suggests that labor department increases for fiscal year 2010 would permit OSHA to "vigorously enforce workplace safety laws and whistleblower protections, and ensure the safety and health of American workers."

Additional funds would reportedly go toward

increased enforcement of laws, including those governing child-labor violations and toward reform of the nation's unemployment insurance system. Overall, the 2010 budget as proposed by the administration would fund the Department of Labor at \$13.3 billion.

The budget document noted that the administration will seek to reverse a trend of "growing workloads and shrinking staff" within OSHA.

A more detailed budget plan will be released in April.

## April Safety Quote

"Don't be a fool when it comes to safety."