

HEARING CONSERVATION PROGRAM SERVICES

as required by Sask OH&S Noise Control Regulations

- 1) **HEARING SCREENING** using the MAX computerized testing equipment for workers exposed to hazardous noise; interpretation of test results with a qualified occupational health professional and counseling on necessary personal action to prevent noise-induced hearing loss; secure records management; automatic comparison to next periodic tests; copy of test results given to employee; referral for further hearing evaluation and follow-up as indicated.

Baseline or Periodic Testing, On-Site (\$47 per person plus out of town mileage), or at the Clinic: \$37 per person

- 2) **EDUCATION SESSIONS** by qualified occupational health professional in a lively interactive 2 hour session including video, demonstration and discussion on the hazards of noise, prevention of noise-induced hearing loss and the proper use and care for hearing protectors; free ear plug samples and take-home literature

\$1,000 per session or group rate

- 3) **SOUND LEVEL MONITORING** in the workplace: evaluating potential hearing hazards and giving advice on administrative and engineering interventions to reduce hazardous noise exposure.

\$250 per hour contract rate

- 4) **CONSULTATION TO EMPLOYERS** in the design and implementation of an effective noise reduction and hearing conservation program using noise regulations as policy guide; management and OHC report with recommendations for interventions and appropriate follow-up.

\$250 per hour contract rate

SASK OH&S NOISE REGULATIONS

What is a Hearing Conservation Program?

An effective Hearing Conservation Program (HCP) is much more than a box full of earplugs in the locker room.

The Saskatchewan OH&S Regulations PART VIII has a clear outline of what is required of workplaces where the noise is 80 dB or over.

What are the first steps?

- Measure the noise
- Post caution signs
- Take reasonable steps to reduce the noise level
- Minimize the workers' noise exposure
- Document the steps taken

If you cannot reduce the noise level, you must then:

- Provide appropriate hearing protection
- Educate workers about noise hazards and preventing noise-induced hearing loss
- Train workers in the selection, use and maintenance of the protectors
- Arrange for hearing testing - baseline and every 24 months during working hours with appropriate counseling and follow-up

Workplaces with 10 or more noise-exposed workers shall:

- Develop a written HCP
- Implement the plan and appoint a supervisor to oversee it

WHAT YOU DON'T KNOW ABOUT NOISE CAN HURT YOU!!

TRUE	FALSE	Impulse noises are sharp outbursts of sound.
TRUE	FALSE	You can only be exposed to harmful noise while on the job.
TRUE	FALSE	How noise affects you depends on how loud it is and how long you are exposed.
TRUE	FALSE	To damage your hearing, a sound must be painful to hear.
TRUE	FALSE	If the noise in your workplace is 85 decibels or over, Saskatchewan OH&S Regulations apply to you.
TRUE	FALSE	ringing in the ears can be a symptom of early hearing loss.
TRUE	FALSE	Work area noise monitoring is done with a sound level meter or a noise dosimeter.
TRUE	FALSE	An audiogram is similar to a telegram.
TRUE	FALSE	Engineering controls change equipment or physical structure to reduce noise.
TRUE	FALSE	You should never wear earplugs and earmuffs together.
Answers: 1.T 2.F 3.T 4.F 5.T 6.T 7.T 8.F 9.T 10.F.		

HOW LOUD IS IT?

0 dB	The softest sound you can hear
10 dB	Breathing
30 dB	Whispering, quiet library, ticking watch, Rice Krispies
60 dB	Normal conversation, sewing machine, average household
70 dB	Idling car engine
80 dB	Telephone, piano, noisy restaurant
90 dB	Lawn mower, shop tools, truck traffic, blender, food processor
100 dB	Train, pneumatic drill, snowmobile
110 dB	Chain saw, wood working shop
115 dB	Sandblasting, car horn, loud music concert
140 dB	Jet engine, gun shot blast

CHOOSING HEARING PROTECTION

Frequently Asked Question's

How do I know if I need protection?

If you have to raise your voice to be heard by someone less than two feet away, the noise level is at 80 decibels or greater and you should be wearing hearing protection.

Don't people in noisy environments just get used to the racket?

No - after long exposure to excess noise you begin to lose your hearing.

What's the worst kind of noise?

The most annoying noise is high-pitched, loud and irregular, or on and off but all kinds of excess noise may eventually cause hearing damage.

I hate earplugs! Won't they hurt my ears?

Just as the human ear canal varies in size and shape so do earplugs. There are a wide variety to choose from and every worker should be properly fitted to get the maximum benefit from their hearing protection. For some workers earmuffs may be the answer.

When I wear earmuffs/plugs, I can't hear the people around me as well. Isn't that a safety risk?

Although hearing protection devices dampen sound, normal-hearing listeners should still be able to understand speech in a background of noise. In most cases, they make it easier to hear speech because the distraction of background noise has been cut down.

How do I know my hearing protection is adequate?

All hearing protective devices have a Noise Reduction Rating (NRR) which represents the rating of the plug or muff to attenuate the noise entering your ear. It is accepted that NRR's are highly over-rated. The goal of hearing protection is to reduce the noise level below 80 dB. With off the shelf earplugs Sask OH&S experts recommend taking 50% of the NRR due to how easy it is to have a poor fit.

I've been working here for years without hearing protection, why should I start wearing them now?

Protective devices can stop further damage to your hearing - deafness does not have to be an occupational disease. It is preventable.