

HEARING CONSERVATION PROGRAM

- AUTHORITY:** California Code of Regulations, Title 8, General Industry Safety Orders, Sections 5096 - 5100 and Article 105
CEO/Risk Management Safety and Loss Prevention Resource Manual
Item, Number 107, Hearing Conservation & Noise Control
American National Standards Institute, S1.4-1971 and S1.25-1978
- RESCINDS:** Procedure Manual Item 1-4-120, dated 10/26/18
- FORMS:** None
- PURPOSE:** To provide guidelines for the Hearing Conservation Program, which prevents hearing impairment as a result of exposure to noise and reduce personal injury.

I. GENERAL INFORMATION

To provide a **comprehensive** Hearing Conservation Program that meets or exceed those standards set forth by the Federal and State Occupational Safety and Health Administrations.

- A. The following elements **must be included**:
1. Evaluation of noise exposures.
 2. Audiometric testing.
 3. Hearing protection.
 4. Training program.
 5. **Recordkeeping.**
 6. Auditing of the program.
- B. The **Safety and Facilities Manager** is responsible for ensuring the Hearing Conservation Program meets or exceeds **regulations** as specified by law and is maintained for the protection of all range staff and armed deputies while on the range.
- C. The Rangemaster/Range Safety Officers are responsible for:
1. Ensuring hearing protection is available and worn properly on the range and in required areas.
 2. Notifying the **Safety and Facilities Manager** when there is a change in the process or when a condition or piece of equipment is modified, causing increased noise levels.

- D. **All range staff and armed deputies** are responsible for wearing hearing protection in accordance with instructions and training received on the range and in those areas designated as required hearing protection.
- E. Visitors are expected to wear **department approved** hearing protection while on the range as directed.
- F. **All** non-disposable hearing protection **devices shall be cleaned** as often as needed to maintain them in a hygienically safe condition.
- G. Report all problems concerning hearing protection devices to the rangemaster/range safety officers immediately and secure replacements as needed.

II. PROCEDURE

A. Evaluation of Noise Exposures

1. Noise Measurements are conducted to:
 - a. Identify work areas that meet or exceed an eight-hour time-weighted average sound level of 85 decibels (dB).
 - b. Determine existing noise levels so priorities for corrective action **are** established.
 - c. Identify areas where hearing protective devices are required.

2. Noise Measuring Equipment:

Orange County Probation uses in-house or contracted services to perform the required noise surveys. The provider uses, at its discretion, sound level meters that conform to the requirements of sound level meters described in **American National Standards Institute – ANSI SI.4-1971** (specifications for sound level meters) and dosimeters that meet the requirements of ANSI SI.25-1978 (specifications for dosimeters).

B. Audiometric Testing

In order to maintain a hearing conservation program, audiometric testing is a requirement. Audiometric testing is the means of measuring the ability of the individual to hear in both ears. This establishes if and to what degree a hearing loss exists. Annual tests can then be compared to a baseline to determine if a change or shift in hearing exists.

1. Frequency and Scheduling: All Rangemasters and Range Officers shall receive a baseline audiometric examination prior to their assignment and at least annually thereafter.
2. Test Evaluation: If a comparison of the annual audiogram to the baseline audiogram indicates a standard threshold shift, **defined as an average increase of 10dB from the baseline audiogram**, Orange County

Probation must fulfill the requirements specified in OSHA Standard 29 CCR Title 8, section 5097 (c)

3. The Rangemaster will schedule the yearly audiometric examination for all Range Officers through **the contracted vendor on file**.

C. Hearing Protection

1. Hearing Protection Devices (**HDP**): There are two basic types of **HDP** used by most industries: **earplugs and earmuffs**. Both protectors serve the same function – **acting** as a barrier between noise and the inner ear, where hearing damage may occur. Orange County Probation fits and trains **applicable** employees on the proper use of **HDP**.
2. Selection of **HDP**: **Attenuation** characteristics, acceptance by employees, durability, environmental, medical and legal considerations all play a major role in the selection of hearing protection at Orange County Probation. **Safety and Facilities Manager** must approve **devices** prior to purchase.
3. Effectiveness of **HDP**: The ability of a **device** to reduce the noise in dB (decibels) before it reaches the inner ear is referred to as attenuation. This ability is different for earplugs and **earmuffs**, **as well as** highly dependent on the frequency components of the noise.

At Probation, the effectiveness of each **device** is evaluated for the specific noise environments in which the **device** will be used.

4. Usage of **HDP**: In areas classified as high noise areas, hearing protection is required. All personnel working in these areas **must** properly wear **required** devices. Disciplinary action **will** be taken if employees do not follow the policy.

D. Training Program

1. The **Safety and Facilities Manager** or the designated vendor is responsible for the development of a training program that covers:
 - a. The effects of noise on hearing.
 - b. The purpose of hearing protection, **information** (advantages, disadvantages, **and** attenuation) of various types, and instructions on selection, **as well as** fitting, use and care.
 - c. The purpose of audiometric testing and an explanation of the test procedures.
 - d. **Posting of hearing conservation posters, communique, etc.**
2. Training is repeated annually for each employee in the Hearing Conservation Program. Information provided in the training program **shall be regularly** updated to be consistent with changes in protective equipment and work processes.

E. Recordkeeping

The documentation and maintenance of records are important aspects of the hearing conservation program. Proper recordkeeping enhances the efficiency of the program along with meeting specified **regulatory** requirements.

Records of exposure monitoring and noise measuring equipment calibrations are maintained by the **Safety and Facilities Manager**. **This individual** or a designated vendor will maintain background noise levels of the audiometric test booth.

F. Auditing of the Program

The Hearing Conservation Program is to be evaluated on an annual basis by the **Safety and Facilities Manager**.

REFERENCES:

None

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APPROVED BY: