INTRODUCTION

This program applies to Eastern Washington University (EWU) personnel who are potentially exposed to sound levels equal to or in excess of 85 decibels (dB for an 8 hour Time Weighted Average) during department operations. This can include working with or around equipment, or in an environment that produces high decibel levels which is considered hazardous noise.

The Environmental Health and Safety (EH&S) Department assists departments on campus with identification of potentially hazardous sound level exposure that is produced during department operations and recommends the appropriate engineering controls or personal protective equipment that is need to decrease the exposure level of hazardous noise.

This procedure is supported by information provided in the Injury and Illness Prevention Procedure and the Medical Monitoring Procedure. The forms to assist with documentation of hazardous noise impacts are the service request form and the incident report form.

PURPOSE

The purpose of this procedure is to provide general safety procedures and is intended to define standard operating procedures regarding employee noise exposure and to comply with the requirements of WAC 296-817. EWU employees who are potentially exposed to a sound level equal to or in excess of 85 dB (8hr TWA) will be provided with approved hearing protection selected in accordance with WAC 296-817-20015. It is up to the supervisor to read and understand WAC 296-817; “Hearing Loss Prevention”.

RESPONSIBILITY

The EH&S Department shall be responsible for supervising the hearing conversation program and ensuring the following.

1. Noise Monitoring, both personal and area
2. Training and annual refresher training for supervisors and employees.
3. Maintaining all records.
4. Ensure audiograms are administered to employees.
5. Appraise the effectiveness of the program on an annual basis.

Supervisors of employees required to use hearing protection shall be responsible for implementing and enforcing the Hearing Conservation Program. Supervisors shall monitor hearing protection use (WAC 296-817-20015).

JOB CLASSIFICATIONS

- All Facilities Maintenance Workers
- All Facilities Services Workers
- Environmental Health and Safety Employees
- Music Department Instructors of band and symphony
Football, coaches, trainers, basketball coaches
Campus Police

WARNING SIGNS

Warning signs will be posted in accordance with the provisions of WAC 296-817-30010.

AUDIOMETRIC EXAMS

1. Pre-employment audiometric exams will be conducted for employees that may be exposed to hazardous noise levels during department operations to establish a baseline.
2. Employees exposed to 85 dBA on an eight hour time weighted average (TWA) will need to undergo audiometric testing.
3. At least annually, an employee will be required to obtain a new audiogram, which will be compared to the baseline audiogram to determine if a standard threshold shift has occurred. Employees will be informed in writing of the results of their annual audiogram and whether or not there has been a hearing level decrease or improvement since the previous test.
4. Employees will be referred for additional evaluation if a significant shift has occurred and/or the examining physician recommends.
5. A reevaluation of work environment, hearing protection, and procedures will be conducted to determine corrective action.

AUDITS

The EH&S Department will conduct quarterly hearing protection audits where workers noise exposure is related to specific classes, or programs that do not exceed six months. These classes/programs would include music department positions and sports positions that are exposed to elevated noise levels (85 dBA 8 TWA).

HEARING PROTECTION

Only ANSI (American National Standards Institute) tested hearing protection will be used. Modification is not permitted on hearing protection devices. Hearing protection shall be selected by one of the methods described in WAC 296-817-20015.

Hearing protectors are issued, wherever possible, to an individual employee for their own use. There is no cost to the employee. The employee shall be fitted prior to issue.

MAINTENANCE

Maintenance shall be carried out on a regular basis. Employees are responsible for routine maintenance and cleaning.
Cleaning: Wash hands and inspect protection for dirt and grease before using. Wash reusable plugs at least once a day; rinse and dry. Store in a plastic case to deter damage and for safe keeping. Replace them when they harden or become discolored. Keep muffs clean by washing the cushions. Since the cushions may harden with use, periodic examination will determine the need for replacement. Store muffs in a safe place, such as a shelf or a locker. Headband plugs are made of washable materials and should be cleaned often. Although they are durable and long-wearing, they mustn't be subjected to twisting or bending. It is important that ear protection is not stored in cases or containers when wet to prevent mold and bacteria growth.

**MONITORING**

The EH&S Department shall evaluate noise hazards via personal dosimeters and/or sound level meters initially and thereafter on a periodic basis.

Employees will be informed in writing of the results of the monitoring.

**TRAINING**

Annual training will be given to all employees who use protectors and their supervisors. Training will include:

1) Effects of noise on hearing,
2) Purpose of hearing protectors, advantages, disadvantages, and attenuation of various types and instruction on selection, fitting, use and care,
3) Purpose of audiometric testing and an explanation of the test procedures,
4) The right to access to records.

**RECORDKEEPING**

Records shall be maintained in the EH&S Department.

**Associated Documents**

Injury and Illness Prevention Procedure
Medical Monitoring Procedure

**Associated Brochures**

Hearing Protection Brochure
Music Hearing Protection Brochure

**Associated Forms**

Service Request Form
Incident Report Form

**Other**

NIOSH Roll-Pull-Hold method for insertion of foam earplugs.
### Revision History

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