

Revision Responsibility: Director of Facility Services and Safety

Responsible Executive Officer: Vice President for Financial & Administrative Services

Source / Reference: Occupational Safety and Health Administration (29 CFR 1910.95)

PURPOSE

The purpose of this written program is to establish the Columbia State Community College policies, procedures and responsibilities for the implementation and management of the Hearing Conservation Program. This program is intended to satisfy the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) requirements for a Hearing Conservation Program as is required in 29 CFR 1910.95.

POLICY

I. Acronyms

- A. CFR - Code of Federal Regulations
- B. dBA - Decibels on A-scale
- C. OSHA - Occupational Safety and Health Administration
- D. SEG - Similar Exposure Group
- E. TWA - Time Weighted Average

II. Employee Responsibilities

- A. Employees are responsible for wearing and maintaining hearing protective devices as instructed.
- B. Employees enrolled in the College's Hearing Conservation Program must also participate in annual training programs and the medical surveillance program, which includes baseline and annual audiometric testing.
- C. Participate in the exposure monitoring program.
- D. Participate in the Exit audiograms when necessary.

III. Monitoring Program

- A. When information indicates that any employee exposure may equal or exceed an 8-hour time weighted average (TWA) of 85 decibels on the A-scale (dBA), Columbia State Community College will implement this monitoring program.
- B. Columbia State will conduct area noise surveys every two years, which will be designed to identify employees for inclusion in the hearing conservation program and to enable the proper selection of hearing protection.
- C. Area noise surveys will also be conducted whenever a change in facilities, processes, equipment or controls increases noise exposures to the extent that:
 - 1. Additional employees may be exposed at or above the action level.
 - 2. The attenuation provided by hearing protectors being used by employees may be rendered inadequate.
- D. Noise dosimetry will be conducted on similar exposure groups (SEG) working in noise hazard areas greater than 80 dBA to determine the personal exposure of employees.
- E. Employee notification

Columbia State will notify each employee exposed at or above an 8-hour TWA of 85 decibels of the results of the monitoring.
- F. Observation of monitoring

Columbia State will provide affected employees or their representatives with an opportunity to observe any noise measurements conducted.

IV. Employee Inclusion

Based on the Noise Monitoring Program, the following employees will be included in the hearing conservation program:

- A. All employees working in a SEG with a noise exposure of 85 dBA for an 8-hour TWA shall be included in the hearing conservation program.
- B. All employees included in this program are listed in Appendix A.

V. Audiometric Testing Program

- A. All employees who are listed in Appendix A shall be included in the audiometric testing program.
- B. Audiograms will be administered by a licensed or certified audiologist, otolaryngologist, or other physician, or by a technician who is certified by the Council of 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 operates microprocessor audiometers does not need to be certified. A technician who performs audiometric tests must be responsible to an audiologist, otolaryngologist or physician.
- C. Baseline Audiogram
 1. A baseline audiogram will be given within 6 months of first exposure to hazardous noise to any employee transferred or hired to work in an area with hazardous noise.
 2. The employee's supervisor shall ensure that the employee receiving the audiogram has not been exposed to workplace noise for a period of at least 14 hours preceding the administration of the baseline audiogram. The employee's supervisor shall also ensure that the employee has been notified that they should avoid high levels of non-occupational noise exposure during the 14 hours immediately preceding the audiometric exam.
- D. Annual Audiogram
 1. Annually, the director of Facility Services and Safety will schedule audiograms for employees included in this hearing conservation program.
 2. These annual audiograms shall be compared to the employee's baseline audiogram to determine if a standard threshold shift has occurred.
 3. If the annual audiogram shows that an employee has suffered a standard threshold shift, Columbia State will send the affected employee for a retest within 30 days.

4. If the follow-up audiogram confirms that the employee has experienced a standard threshold shift, the employee shall be informed in writing within 21 days of the determination.

E. Exit Audiogram

1. When feasible, thirty days prior to any employee transferring, retiring or resigning from a job assignment included in the hearing conservation program an exit audiogram will be provided to ensure the integrity of the employee's hearing.
2. The exit audiogram shall follow the procedures outlined for the annual audiogram.

VI. Hearing Protective Devices

- A. Columbia State will mark all areas identified as high noise areas through the monitoring with hearing protection required signage.
- B. Columbia State's current hearing protection required areas are:
 1. The Hickman Building Generator Area (When Generator is Operating)
 2. The Finney Library Building Generator Area (When Generator is Operating)
- C. This will be marked with signage and appropriate placarding.
- D. Additionally, hearing protection is required when operating mobile equipment such as tractors, lawn mowers, pressure washers, weed-eaters, chainsaws, etc.

VII. Employee Training Program

- A. All employees shall receive training prior to being assigned to an area that requires inclusion in the hearing conservation program.
- B. All employees included in the hearing conservation program shall receive annual retraining on hearing conservation.

VIII. Access to Information

- A. A copy of the OSHA Standard 29-CFR 1910.95 shall be made available to those employees in the hearing conservation program.
- B. A copy of the OSHA Standard 29-CFR 1910.95 has been posted for employees to have easy access.
- C. Exposure records, Audiometric test records, training material, and a copy of the Hearing Conservation Program shall be made available to an OSHA Compliance Officer upon request.

IX. Record Keeping

- A. Audiometric test records shall be maintained for the duration of the affected employee's employment plus 30 years. The Audiometric test records shall include:
 - 1. Name and job classification of the employee.
 - 2. Date of the audiogram(s).
 - 3. The examiner's name.
 - 4. Date of the last acoustic or exhaustive calibration of the audiometer.
 - 5. Employee's most recent noise exposure assessment.
- B. Noise exposure records shall be retained for a period of the employee's employment plus 30 years.
- C. These noise exposure records and audiograms shall be maintained in the employee's personnel files in the medical section.
- D. Documentation of annual and new-hire training, hearing tests and noise level tests can be found in the Facility Services Office.