

MARIPOSA COUNTY HEARING CONSERVATION PROGRAM

POLICY

Mariposa County (County), through its management, is committed to the safety and health of all employees and recognizes the need to comply with regulations governing injury and accident prevention and employee safety. The Hearing Conservation Program, through its implementation, will help ensure that employees work safely around hazardous levels of noise during their assigned tasks.

PURPOSE

The purpose of this Hearing Conservation Program is to outline the requirements needed to protect all employees from overexposure to occupational noise. In addition, the County must comply with Cal/OSHA Regulations in Title 8 California Code of Regulations Sections 5097-5100 (8 CCR 5097-5100) as applicable to current operations.

RESPONSIBILITIES

The County Board of Supervisors is responsible to review and approve this procedure.

The Injury and Illness Prevention Program Administrators are responsible for the administration of the requirements of this procedure, and assisting the applicable Department Heads and Department Safety Coordinators with the implementation of this procedure as it applies to their operations.

All County employees are responsible to work in a safe manner and comply with the requirements of this procedure, and to wear appropriate hearing protection when required.

MONITORING & POSTING PROCEDURE

A monitoring program will be implemented to determine employee sound level exposures when information indicates that employee exposure may exceed an 8-hour TWA of 85 decibels (action level). The applicable Department Heads with the assistance of their Department Safety Coordinators will assure that the appropriate resources are made available to conduct noise monitoring.

Monitoring must be repeated whenever a change in operations, process, or equipment may increase sound level exposure such that additional employees may be exposed at or above the action level, or that hearing protection may not meet the attenuation requirements given in this procedure.

Affected employees or their representatives shall be provided with an opportunity to observe any noise measurements conducted for the above monitoring purposes.

Signs that designate “hearing protection required” areas will be posted for exposure control in all work locations where the noise level has been measured at 90 dBA or greater.

AUDIOMETRIC TESTING PROCEDURE

Audiometric testing will be established for each employee exposed to an 8-hour TWA of 85 decibels (action level) or higher. The audiometric testing program will be provided at County expense and will include the requirements in the following paragraphs. The County provides audiometric tests through the County Health Officer.

A baseline audiogram will be established within 6 months of the employee’s first exposure at or above the action level. This will then be used as a comparison for subsequent audiograms. Baseline audiogram testing must be preceded by at least 14 hours without exposure to noise levels in excess of 85 dBA. Hearing protectors may be used as a substitute for the “14 hours without exposure to noise” requirement.

An audiogram shall be obtained at least annually after the baseline audiogram for each employee exposed to an 8-hour TWA of 85 decibels (action level) or higher, and the results of the annual audiogram will be compared to the employee’s baseline audiogram to determine if a standard threshold shift has occurred.

If the annual audiogram indicates that an employee has developed a standard threshold shift, a retest will be obtained within 30 days. The results of the retest may be considered to meet the requirement of the annual audiogram.

Annual audiograms that indicate a standard threshold shift may have occurred will be reviewed along with the baseline audiogram and other relevant information by the consulting physician. If a standard threshold shift has occurred, the employee shall be informed in writing, within 21 days of the determination.

When the consulting physician determines that the standard threshold shift is work-related or aggravated by occupational noise exposure, the following steps shall be taken.

- Employees not wearing hearing protection must be fitted with hearing protection, trained in their use and care, and required to wear them.
- Employees already wearing hearing protection must be refitted and re-trained with hearing protection that provides greater attenuation as needed.

HEARING PROTECTION

Hearing protection devices are available to all employees exposed to an 8-hour TWA of 85 decibels (action level) or greater.

Employees with an 8-hour TWA greater than 90 decibels (Cal/OSHA PEL) are required to wear hearing protection devices which attenuate employee exposure to an 8-hour TWA of 90 decibels or lower.

Employees with an 8-hour TWA of 85 decibels or greater shall be required to wear hearing protection if they have not yet had a baseline audiogram established or if they have experienced a standard threshold shift. Hearing protection devices for employees who have experienced a standard threshold shift shall attenuate employee exposure to an 8-hour TWA of 85 decibels or lower.

A variety of hearing protection devices must be made available in order for employees to select hearing protection with the best fit for their use.

RECORD KEEPING

All records of employee exposure monitoring will be maintained as required by Cal/OSHA regulations 8 CCR 3204.

All measured employee STS (standard threshold shift) will be recorded on the County's annual OSHA 300 log in the year that they occur.

All audiometric test records shall be retained in the employee's medical file by Human Resources/Risk Management Director, or his designee, and shall include:

- Employee's name and job classification.
- Date of audiogram.
- Examiner's name.
- Date of last acoustic or exhaustive calibration of the audiometer.
- Background sound pressure level in audiometric test room.

Records shall be retained for the following periods as required by Cal/OSHA regulations in 8 CCR 3204.

- Noise exposure monitoring records – 30 years + time of employment.
- Audiometric test records – 30 years + time of employment.

TRAINING

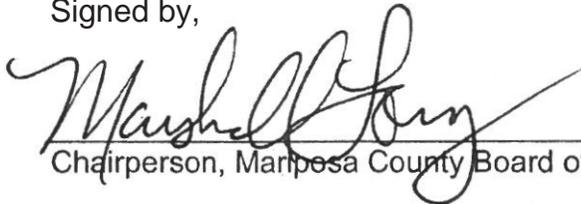
Training and audiometric testing must be provided within 6 months of hire and annually for all employees in the hearing conservation program. Training will include:

- The effects of noise on hearing.
- The purpose of hearing protection devices.

- Advantages and disadvantages of various hearing protection types.
- Instruction on fitting, use, and care of hearing protection devices.
- An explanation of audiometric testing purposes and procedures.

Training records are maintained as specified in the County's Injury and Illness Prevention Program.

Signed by,



Chairperson, Mariposa County Board of Supervisors

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