

# **Hearing Conservation Program**

**POWELL COUNTY, MT**

**1910.95**  
**Hearing Conservation Program**  
**Table of Contents**

- I. Objective
- II. Assignment of Responsibility
  - A. Management
  - B. Employees
- III. Procedures
  - A. Noise Monitoring
  - B. Employee Training
  - C. Hearing Protection
  - D. Audiograms/Hearing Tests
- IV. Attachments
  - A. Hearing Conservation Training Log
  - B. Record of Hearing Protection Needs

**Hearing Conservation Program  
for  
Powell County**

**I. OBJECTIVE**

The objective of the Powell County Hearing Conservation Program is to minimize occupational hearing loss by providing hearing protection, training, and annual hearing tests to all persons working in areas or with equipment that have noise levels equal to or exceeding an eight-hour time-weighted average (TWA) sound limit of 85 dBA (decibels measured on the A scale of a sound level meter). A copy of this program will be maintained by all affected departments. A copy of OSHA's Hearing Conservation Standard, 29 CFR 1910.95, can be obtained from the Safety Adviser. A copy of the standard will also be posted in areas with affected employees.

**II. ASSIGNMENT OF RESPONSIBILITY**

A. Management

1. Use engineering and administrative controls to limit employee exposure.
2. Provide adequate hearing protection for employees.
3. Post signs and warnings in all high noise areas.
4. Conduct noise surveys annually or when new equipment is needed.
5. Conduct annual hearing test for all employees.
6. Conduct hearing conservation training for all new employees.
7. Conduct annual hearing conservation training for all employees.

B. Employees

1. Use company-issue approved hearing protection in designated high noise areas.
2. Request new hearing protection when needed.
3. Exercise proper care of issued hearing protection.

**III. PROCEDURES**

A. Noise Monitoring

1. Monitoring for noise exposure levels will be conducted by Safety Adviser/MaCO representative. It is the responsibility of the individual departments to notify the Safety Adviser when there is a possible need for monitoring. Monitoring will be performed with the use of sound level meters and personal dosimeters at the discretion of Safety Adviser.

2. Monitoring will also be conducted whenever there is a change in equipment, process or controls that affect the noise levels. This includes the addition or removal of machinery, alteration in building structure, or substitution of new equipment in place of that previously used. The responsible supervisor must inform the Safety Adviser when these types of changes are instituted.

## B. Employee Training

1. Affected employees will be required to attend training concerning the proper usage and wearing of hearing protection. The training will be conducted by the Safety Adviser or a designated representative, within a month of hire and annually thereafter.

2. Training shall consist of the following components:

- a. how noise affects hearing and hearing loss;
- b. review of the OSHA hearing protection standard;
- c. explanation of audiometric testing;
- d. rules and procedures;
- e. locations within company property where hearing protection is required; and
- f. how to use and care for hearing protectors.

3. Training records will be maintained by the Safety Adviser (see Attachment A).

## C. Hearing Protection

Management, supervisors, and employees shall properly wear the prescribed hearing protection while working or traveling through any area that is designated as a high noise area.

1. Hearing protection will be provided at no cost to employees who perform tasks designated as having a high noise exposure and replaced as necessary. It is the supervisor's responsibility to require employees to wear hearing protection when noise levels reach or exceed 85 dBA. Those employees will have the opportunity to choose from at least two different types of hearing protection.

2. Personal stereo headsets, or "Walkmen," are not approved for hearing protection and are not permitted in any operating area of company property.

3. Signage is required in areas that necessitate hearing protection. It is the responsibility of Powell County to provide signage to the appropriate areas.
4. Prefomed earplugs and earmuffs should be washed periodically and stored in a clean area. Foam inserts should be discarded after each use. Hands should be washed before handling prefomed earplugs and foam inserts to prevent contaminants from being placed in the ear.
5. Safety Adviser will keep a log of the areas or job tasks designated as requiring hearing protection, as well as the personnel affected by this Hearing Conservation Program (see Attachment B).

#### D. Audiograms/Hearing Tests

1. Employees subject to the Hearing Conservation Program who have time-weighted average (TWA) noise exposures of 85 dBA or greater for an eight (8) hour work shift will be required to have both a baseline and annual audiogram. The audiograms will be provided by the *Company Name* and conducted by Powell County with no cost to the employee.
2. The baseline audiogram will be given to an employee within one (1) month of employment with Powell County, and before any exposure to high noise levels. Annual audiograms will be performed within one year from the date of the previous audiogram. It is the responsibility of the individual and the Safety Adviser to schedule the annual audiogram.
3. If an annual audiogram shows that an employee has suffered a standard threshold shift, the employee will be retested within thirty (30) days of the annual audiogram. If the retest confirms the occurrence of a standard threshold shift, the employee will be notified in writing within twenty-one (21) days of the confirmation. Employees who do experience a standard threshold shift will be refitted with hearing protection and provided more training on the effects of noise.



