

# HEARING CONSERVATION PROGRAM

## Program Element

### [R2-10-207\(10\)\(c\)](#)

Each agency shall develop, implement, and monitor a Hearing Conservation Program element when applicable.

This document outlines the key components and protocols aimed at safeguarding the auditory well-being of state employees. Through proactive measures, education, and regular assessments, agencies should strive to create a workplace environment that prioritizes hearing health and ensures compliance with industry standards.

<b>Definition:</b>	A hearing conservation program is a written program of management and monitoring practices to “prevent initial occupational hearing loss, preserve and protect remaining hearing, and equip workers with the knowledge and hearing protection devices (PPE) necessary to safeguard themselves.” ( <a href="#">OSHA</a> )
<b>Why do I need this program?</b>	OSHA Standards require employers to protect employees from known exposures, including noise levels that may cause hearing loss. This involves identifying areas where noise levels are suspected to exceed the action level and performing sound level testing. If the levels are in excess of the action level the employer should attempt to reduce employee exposure to noise by applying the hierarchy of controls methodology. If the employee exposure cannot be reduced below the action levels, signage, hearing protection, training and annual hearing exams are required at the employer's expense.
<b>How do I know if this program applies to my agency and my specific job hazards?</b>	<p>If one must raise their voice to speak to someone 3 feet away, noise levels might be over 85 decibels. Several noise-measuring instruments are available to measure the noise levels in a workspace. These include sound level meters, noise dosimeters, and octave band analyzers.</p> <p>Noise may be a problem in the workplace if employees:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Hear ringing or humming after leaving work.</li><li>• Have to shout to be heard by a coworker an arm's length away.</li><li>• Experience temporary hearing loss after leaving work.</li></ul>

<p><b>What are the minimum required elements and/ or best practices for a Hearing Conservation Program?</b></p>	<p>If noise monitoring confirms that workers are exposed to noise levels at or above an 8-hour time-weighted average sound level (TWA) of 85 dBA, a hearing conservation program must be developed and implemented. The program must include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) Policy and procedures;</li> <li>b) Hazard identification and exposure monitoring;</li> <li>c) Control methods (using the hierarchy of controls);</li> <li>d) Hearing protection devices (selection, use, and maintenance);</li> <li>e) Audiometric testing;</li> <li>f) Hazard communication, education and training;</li> <li>g) Recordkeeping; and</li> <li>h) Continuous monitoring and improvement (program review).</li> </ul>
<p><b>Are there any mandatory training requirements or best practices that must be developed by the agency?</b></p>	<p>Training must be given before an employee is assigned to an area where occupational noise levels are above the action level. The Hearing Conservation Program training must be repeated annually and shall include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The effects of noise on hearing;</li> <li>• The purpose of hearing protectors;</li> <li>• The advantages, disadvantages, and attenuation of various types of hearing protectors;</li> <li>• Instructions on selection, fitting, use, and care of hearing protectors;</li> <li>• The purpose of audiometric testing; and</li> <li>• An explanation of the test procedures.</li> </ul> <p>The training program must be reviewed and updated to be consistent with any changes that have occurred in the workplace affecting noise levels or employee exposure. The training program should be reviewed annually.</p> <p>In addition to the agency's site-specific training, State Risk Management recommends the following general awareness training available through the <a href="#">State's Employee Learning Portal</a>.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• ADRISKNIHL, Noise Induced Hearing Loss</li> </ul>

<p><b>Are there specific requirements for documenting the program, training, etc...?</b></p>	<p>Exposure measurements shall be maintained and include an accurate record for all employees. Audiometric test records must include the employee's name and job classification, date of the audiogram, examiner's name, date of the last acoustic or exhaustive calibration, measurements of the background sound pressure levels in audiometric test rooms, and the employee's most recent noise exposure measurement.</p> <p>Noise exposure measurement records shall be retained for two years, and audiometric test records shall be retained for the duration of the affected employee's employment.</p> <p>Written procedures should be developed and conveyed to all employees regarding hearing conservation within the workplace.</p> <p>All training must be documented either in paper format, electronic means, or via the <a href="#">State's Employee Learning Portal</a>.</p> <p>Program documents, training materials, and attendance rosters must be retained in accordance with the <a href="#">AZ Library, Archives and Public Records general retention schedules</a>.</p>
<p><b>Are there any resources available that can assist me in putting together a Hearing Conservation Program?</b></p>	<p>State Risk Management has Loss Prevention Consultants available to assist in the establishment of a Hearing Conservation Program.</p> <p>For assistance contact State Risk Management Loss Prevention at <a href="mailto:rmdlossprevention@azdoa.gov">rmdlossprevention@azdoa.gov</a>.</p> <p><b><u>Additional Resources:</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <a href="#">Hearing Conservation Program Template 1-2024</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">The OSHA Occupational Noise Exposure Topic</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">The OSHA Hearing Conservation Standard, 29 CFR 1910.95</a></li> <li>• <i>Noise and Hearing Conservation Manual</i>, latest Edition edited, AIHA. Visit <a href="#">The Noise Manual, 6th edition   AIHA</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">Arizona Procurement Portal</a> identifies contracted vendors under the "Statewide Assessment and Remediation of Hazardous or Regulated Substances or Materials" to assist in identifying and monitoring occupational noise.</li> </ul>