

## ADMINISTRATIVE POLICY AND PROCEDURE

**Subject:** HEARING CONSERVATION PROGRAM

**Policy No.:** A422

Supersedes: February 1, 2016

Review Date: April 19, 2023

Origin Date: April 1, 1999

Revision Date: April 19, 2023

### **POLICY:**

To establish and maintain an effective noise control and Hearing Conservation Program at Rancho Los Amigos National Rehabilitation Center.

### **PURPOSE:**

The Hearing Conservation Program is designed to reduce or control noise exposure and protect employees from hearing loss. This Hearing Conservation Program will comply with the General Industry Safety Orders 5095 through 5100, Cal/OSHA, Title 8, Article 105, California Code of Regulations.

### **SCOPE:**

The Safety Officer or Designee will identify noisy areas in the facility and will take steps to protect personnel who work in these areas by means of engineering control, administrative controls, and personal protective equipment. When engineering and administrative controls cannot control noise, hearing protection devices will be available to those employees who are exposed to an 8-hour time weighted average (TWA) noise level of 85 decibels (dBA).

The Safety Officer or his Designee will coordinate training for those who are subject to the Hearing Conservation Program or will arrange for those employees to be trained.

The Safety Officer will approve hearing devices appropriate for the specific equipment, operations, or facilities; and will evaluate hearing protection devices.

### **PROCEDURE:**

The Hearing Conservation Program will consist of the following:

1. Sound level monitoring and sound level studies of equipment, operations, and facilities suspected of producing excessive noise.
2. Observation of noise level standards in Cal/OSHA, Title 8, Article 108, General Industry Safety Order 5100, Appendices A through E, California Code of Regulations.
3. Identification of employees exposed to excessive noise levels as determined in sound level studies as determined in sound level studies of equipment, operations, and facilities.
4. Modification of equipment, operations, or facilities producing noise levels or limitations of the exposure to excessive noise levels, where possible.
5. Use of appropriate hearing protection devices (earplugs or earmuffs) to protect hearing.

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Revised: 5/03, 6/13, 2/16, 4/23

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Approved By:

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6. Audiometric examinations (baseline, annual, and at termination) for employees subject to the Hearing Conservation Program.
7. Annual training of employees stated in the Hearing Conservation Program.
8. Maintenance of records of employees' audiometric testing results as required in the General Industry Safety Order, Section 5100.

**RESPONSIBILITIES:**

Management, supervisors, employees, and the Safety Officer or his Designee will share the responsibilities for implementing and maintaining an effective, ongoing Hearing Conservation Program.

**I. SUPERVISORS:**

1. Identify noisy work areas that may expose employees to harmful levels of noise and notify the Safety Officer.
2. Evaluate hearing protector attenuation for the specific noise environments in which the protector will be used. Use the Noise Reduction Rating (NRR) method to estimate the adequacy of hearing protector attenuation.
3. Make hearing protectors available to all employees exposed to an 8-hour TWA or 85 dBA or above.
4. Enforce the use of hearing protection devices where necessary. Check to ensure that employees are properly wearing their hearing protectors.
5. Provide annual training on noise control and hearing protectors to all employees exposed to occupational noise.
6. Train or arrange for training of employees covered by the Hearing Conservation Program. Ensure that they understand and comply with all appropriate safety procedures, whether written or oral.
7. Maintain a sign-in sheet in the Safety meeting, using the employees signature to verify completion of required training.
8. Develop methods for noise abatement, reduction, or control.

**II. EMPLOYEES:**

1. Employees subject to the Hearing Conservation Program will use the hearing protectors (earplugs or earmuffs) as prescribed and approved by the Safety Officer.
2. Employees will comply with the requirements of this program, whether written or oral; and will follow the instructions of their supervisors regarding wearing of protective devices.
3. Employees who fail to follow the requirements of either the program, or their supervisors, will be subject to disciplinary action.

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4. Employees will use common sense and good judgment at all times, recognizing that the number of potential hazards that may exist or be created in the workplace is unpredictable.

**SOUND LEVEL MONITORING, SOUND LEVEL STUDIES, AND PERIODIC MONITORING:**

The Safety Officer will monitor, with an appropriate sound level device, the equipment, operations, or facilities suspected of producing excessive noise.

The Safety Officer or his Designee will use the results from the sound level device to determine which equipment or operations of facilities exceed the noise level standards in the General Industry Orders.

During routine inspection, the Safety Officer, or his Designee, and the appropriate supervisors will evaluate and identify equipment, operations, or facilities for excessive noise, based on the following criteria:

1. Employees having difficulty communicating by speech in a noisy area, when the listener and speaker face each other at a distance of two (2) feet.
2. Employees complaining of head noises or ringing in their ears after working in a noisy area for a specific period of time.
3. Employees experiencing a temporary loss of hearing that has the effect of muffling speech and certain other sounds, after several hours of exposure to noise.

**HEARING PROTECTORS:**

The hearing protectors (earplugs or earmuffs) shall provide a degree of protection which will reduce noise exposure to safe levels as determined by OSHA. Protective devices should be effective and comfortable for the user.

Employees shall use hearing protection devices (earplugs or earmuffs) whenever they are working in an area that produces excessive noise, i.e., above 85 dBA for 8-hour TWA.

Employees shall clean and maintain their hearing protectors.

**ANNUAL AUDIOMETRIC TESTING:**

The Safety Officer in collaboration with the Department of Occupational Health shall establish and maintain an audiometric testing program as provided in Section 5097 of the General Industry Safety Orders. The testing shall be made available to all employees whose exposures equal or exceed the action level. The program shall be provided at no cost to the employees

Where an employee chooses to have audiometric testing done elsewhere and a baseline audiogram has not been obtained within 6 months of the employee's first exposure at or above the action level, the employer or the Safety Officer shall make hearing protectors available to the employee in accordance with Section 5098, and require that the hearing protectors are worn by the employee until the baseline audiogram is obtained.

**EMPLOYEE TRAINING:**

Employees subject to the Hearing Conservation Program shall receive annual training on the following topics:

1. Effects of noise on hearing.
2. Purpose of the hearing protector including advantages, disadvantages, and attenuation of various types. Instructions on selection and fitting of the protector.
3. Use and care of hearing protectors.

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4. The purpose of audiometric testing and an explanation of the test procedures.
5. An explanation of Cal/OSHA regulatory requirements of the program.
6. Access to Information and Training Materials.

**RECORDKEEPING:**

The Safety Officer shall establish a record keeping system which meets the requirements of Cal/OSHA Title 8, California Code of Regulations, General Industry Safety Order 5100. The record keeping shall include the following items:

1. The results of the periodic/routine monitoring of the equipment, operations or facilities.
2. Audiometric testing results, including audiogram, name and classification of employee, date of audiogram, name of the examiner, date of audiometric calibration, and date of employee's last audiologic assessment.
3. Training records of employees that are subject to the Hearing Conservation Program.

**REFERENCE:**

General Industry Safety Orders, Sections 5095 through 5100, Cal/OSHA, Title 8, Article 105, California Code of Regulations.