

W.C.B. Hearing Conservation Section
Sample written program--small employer

Ace Excavating
Noise Control and Hearing Conservation Program

1. Noise Measurement

We are exempt from the requirement to measure noise exposure of workers, as WCB noise survey data indicates mobile equipment operators are routinely exposed to over 85 dBA Lex, and require a hearing conservation program.

2. Education and Training

As all our workers are exposed to greater than 85 dBA Lex, education and training in effects of noise on hearing, use and maintenance of hearing protection and purpose of hearing testing is provided during the workers' annual hearing tests. ABC Audio (the hearing test contractor) ensures that these areas are covered with each worker through individual discussion and WCB-produced pamphlets.

3. Noise Control

Some retrofitting in the form of additional insulation in equipment cabs has been carried out. Two excavators will be retired over the next five years. We are reviewing equipment specifications with respect to operator noise exposure, and plan to replace the excavators with quieter equipment.

4. Hearing Protection

Hearing protection is provided to all employees on hiring. Company policy is that hearing protection is to be worn whenever the employee is operating equipment, and when near any noise sources on construction sites. We provide two different earmuffs and disposable foam earplugs. These are issued by the supervisor, who maintains a record of what is issued to each worker, and provides replacements or hygiene kits as needed.

ABC Audio is given samples of the hearing protection we supply when they come to do our hearing tests. They check the fit and condition of the worker's hearing protection, and advise which hearing protector is most suitable. If any worker wants custom-molded earplugs, ABC Audio supplies them.

After the annual hearing testing, ABC Audio provides the manager with feedback about hearing protection (use, worker satisfaction), along with recommendations for changes.

Sample written program--small employer, cont'd

The supervisor is responsible for monitoring and enforcing the use of hearing protection by employees during his site inspections.

5. Posting of Noise Hazard Areas

The interior of excavator cabs are posted with a noise hazard sign (see attached sample). These signs are checked on routine inspections by the supervisor and replaced if necessary. Not all construction sites employees work on are signposted for noise, but our company policy requires the use of hearing protection as previously outlined under #4 - Hearing Protection.

6. Hearing Tests

Newhires are tested within one month of employment by ABC Audio at their fixed office facility. Annual tests are conducted in May of each year, at our annual staff meeting, by ABC Audio's mobile van. The schedule for annual tests is drawn up by our supervisor, who ensures all workers attend for their tests.

Employer copies of hearing test results are kept by ABC Audio, with our written authorization. Any worker wanting a copy of these results can telephone their office and ABC Audio will provide copies to workers at ABC's expense.

Our written contract with ABC Audio states that their testing of our employees will comply with the O.H. & S. Regulation and Guidelines, Part 7, Sections 7.8 and 7.9. It further states that sufficient time will be allowed for counselling on the test results and on use and maintenance of hearing protection (approximately 20 minutes for each annual retest and 30 minutes for each newhire). Copy of contract attached.

7. Annual Program Review

We receive annual statistics from the WCB each year in late February. We make a copy and send it to ABC Audio. The manager and occupational health and safety representative review the statistics and the Hearing Conservation Program Checklist supplied by the WCB. If deficiencies are identified, the manager takes corrective action. A report on the status of the program is presented to employees by the manager at our annual staff meeting.

Any employees with Early Warning Change category receive additional coaching from our supervisor on the use of hearing protection.