

Industrial Audiometric Technician Training Course

The Industrial Audiometric Technician Training Course prepares the learner to carry out basic hearing tests on noise-exposed workers in industry, in compliance with the WorkSafeBC *Occupational Health and Safety Regulation*. It introduces the learner to the role of the Industrial Audiometric Technician (IAT) in a comprehensive Hearing Conservation Program.

This course is offered through the British Columbia Institute of Technology (BCIT), based in Burnaby BC. The curriculum, including all materials, texts, audio-visuals, and evaluations, are developed by the Hearing Loss Prevention Section of WorkSafeBC. Courses are taught at the Burnaby campus, but can also be arranged for other locations. Contact BCIT—Occupational Health and Safety program, School of Health Sciences for further information.

The current schedule of course can be viewed on the BCIT's website.

Goals

On successful completion of this course, the learner will have the knowledge and skills to:

- verify the need for hearing conservation programs in industry in British Columbia
- conduct hearing tests on noise-exposed workers
- counsel workers on the results of their hearing tests
- advise workers about their hearing protection
- administer hearing conservation programs in industry
- be eligible for authorization to conduct hearing tests from the WorkSafeBC (NOTE: this credential may be accepted in other jurisdictions in North America).

Course Activities & Design

The Industrial Audiometric Training Course provides participants with the knowledge and skills to successfully conduct Hearing Conservation Programs in industry in British Columbia.

The course emphasizes an applied, or practical, approach to all course and reference materials. Lectures, brainstorming, small group activities, discussions, workshops, and role-playing are instructional techniques used to promote the learning environment. There is extensive pre-reading required for each class.

The course is approximately 28 hours in length, conducted over a four-day period.

Approximately two-thirds of the course is devoted to classroom activities such as lectures, watching instructional videos, listening to audiotapes, participating in discussions, and completing in-class assignments. One-third of the time is devoted to practicum—application of curriculum content in a role-playing situation with other class members.

Instructional materials used include handouts, checklists, flow-charts, posters, pamphlets and booklets.

To consolidate the material from the day's classroom activities, review questions from the Training and Reference Manual are assigned each evening; these questions are discussed in the class the next morning.

While a testing station is provided for each pair of students, an actual audiometric booth may or may not be available for the students' use. However, the students are trained on the same equipment they will be operating in their employment setting.

In addition to performing actual hearing tests, the student - 'IAT's' do extensive role playing of counseling on a variety of topics: test procedures, test results and significance, follow-up suggested, hazards of noise on and off the job, use, care, maintenance of hearing protection, any questions the 'worker' may have.

During the practicum, the student - 'workers' are encouraged to simulate or offer real-life problems or concerns about hearing protection and hearing loss in order to provide the student - 'IAT' with the opportunity to problem-solve.

As well, during the practicum sessions, feedback on the student - 'IAT' performance is provided by the instructor as well as the student - 'worker'.

The course content and activities are very concentrated and students must be alert. It is recommended that the participants take this into account when planning lunchtime engagements or out of course social activities. Attention must be paid to class start times each day.

Evaluation

Evaluation of this course is based on the following:

1. homework assignment (weighted as 5 points/100)
2. written examination (weighted as 20 points/100)
3. practicum examination (weighted as 75 points/100)

All three evaluations are conducted during the course.

To be successful, the learner must obtain scores of at least:

- 80% each of three components graded in the practicum exam
- 80% on the written exam
- a total aggregate score of 80% on all three areas (homework assignment, written exam, and practicum exam)

The learner will be notified by the instructor at the end of the examinations on the fourth day of the course as to the marks obtained.

After the course, the instructor provides a class list with evaluation scores to the senior occupational audiologist at the Hearing Loss Prevention Section, WorkSafeBC. The course marks form part of the decision to approve authorization.

Personal Learning Characteristics

The following characteristics are usually present in learners who are successful and who find this course interesting, challenging, but rewarding:

- successful completion of Grade 12 or its equivalent
- some exposure to science courses, e.g. biology, chemistry, physics, mathematics
- good command of the English language, both verbal and written
- good eye-hand co-ordination
- familiarity with completing detailed paperwork and filing or scheduling systems
- some familiarity with electronic equipment
- some computer skills
- experience working in noisy industry
- familiarity with workers
- some exposure to either health or safety related fields and/or programs, e.g. as a first aid attendant, nurse or other medical personnel, safety officer, etc.
- ability to deal with people in a confidential manner
- experience in counseling
- ability to work without direct supervision
- interest in the fields of hearing loss, noise, hearing loss prevention

Prerequisites for Authorization

In order to obtain authorization from the WorkSafeBC, the student must pass this course as well as be either:

- a) currently employed as a full-time or part-time employee for a firm which falls under the jurisdiction of WorkSafeBC and must comply with the noise and hearing conservation regulations; or,
- b) the owner of a private audiometric contracting business; i.e. a private business, which offers a fee for service to industries in BC, which must comply with the noise and hearing conservation regulations. Also referred to as “Industrial Hearing Test Provider”; or,
- c) sponsored by/employed by an Industrial Hearing Test Provider.

Certification

It is the responsibility of the student to apply for authorization to conduct hearing tests.

Successful students who wish to be authorized must submit an appropriately completed “Authorization for Application” form to WorkSafeBC, where it will be reviewed. If accepted, it will be processed and the applicant will be issued a wallet-sized card, which authorizes the holder to perform pure-tone air-conduction audiometry in accordance with the WorkSafeBC Occupational Health & Safety Regulation.

A holder of such authorization is called an 'Industrial Audiometric Technician'.

Maximum initial period of authorization is normally 1 year; to maintain continued authorization, IATs must attend and successfully complete a one-day, seven hour Refresher Course, also provided by BCIT. The authorization interval after a successfully completed Refresher Course is normally 2 years.

After obtaining authorization, it is anticipated that the IAT will consult with the senior occupational audiologist of the Hearing Loss Prevention Section as a resource on an on-going basis. It is expected that IATs will telephone or email the senior occupational audiologist with questions, concerns, observations, and problems.