

Green Brothers Pulp Mill--Noise Control and Hearing Conservation Program

Areas of Responsibility:

- a. Management will support and appropriately fund the Hearing Conservation Program
- b. Safety Department—the industrial audiometric technicians, under the management and direction of the Industrial Hygienist, will
 - *conduct periodic noise surveys (hygienist)
 - *review suggested options for noise control and make recommendations to the H&S committee
 - *develop and provide, as well as maintain records of education & training, during safety orientation and in crew talks
 - *issue hearing protection devices and replacement kits
 - *purchase appropriate hearing protection devices and issue as necessary
 - *provide replacement noise hazard signs
 - *schedule and conduct all hearing tests
 - *maintain records of hearing tests in a confidential manner
 - *provide information to the joint Health & Safety Committee for annual program review
- c. Foremen will
 - *monitor and ensure the wearing of hearing protection in all posted areas
 - *check the fit and condition of hearing protection and ensure replacement
 - *ensure workers attend crew talks
 - *ensure workers attend annual hearing test
- d. Workers will
 - *wear hearing protection in all posted areas
 - *attend crew talks
 - *take hearing tests
 - *bring hearing protection device(s) to the hearing test
- e. Purchasing agent will
 - *purchase types and quantities of hearing protection as directed by the industrial hygienist

1. Noise Measurement

A noise exposure survey of the mill has been carried out, which indicates areas where noise exceeds 85 dBA (see Appendix 1 for most recent survey). The hygienist conducted this survey in accordance with the CSA Standard Z107.56-94 standard. An integrating sound level meter was purchased and used. The six noise dosimeters have been sent to the supplier for conversion to the 85 dBA criterion level and appropriate threshold level.

The hygienist will recheck ¼ of all noisy areas each year, such that the entire mill is re-surveyed in a 4-year period.

W.C.B. Hearing Conservation Section
Sample written program—Who, What, When

If a change in equipment or process, or duration of exposure changes, the hygienist will resurvey the affected workers within one month of the change being brought to his/her attention.

Requests for a survey, along with justification, must be submitted in writing to the hygienist, with a copy sent to the joint Health & Safety committee.

2. Education and Training

All newhires receive information on the effects of noise on hearing, use and maintenance of hearing protection and purpose of hearing testing during the safety orientation program. This is delivered by our industrial audiometric technicians, using a video and pamphlets provided by the WCB.

For employees already on staff, the technicians review this information at the time of the worker's annual hearing test.

Additionally, crew talks will be held to inform workers of their noise exposure and the implications of the results for risk of hearing loss. These will be completed by the end of the calendar year and will be repeated every 2 years.

3. Noise Control

An acoustical engineering consultant has been retained to make recommendations for engineered noise control options. The safety committee will review this report with senior management and will develop a plan for implementing practicable options.

Suggestions for noise control solutions are solicited at the crew talks and are passed along to the industrial hygienist for consideration, who in turn makes recommendations to the joint Health & Safety committee.

4. Hearing Protection

The industrial audiometric technicians and the industrial hygienist, with reference to the selection criteria in CSA Z94.2-94, determine selection of hearing protection for purchase. We provide two Class A and B earmuffs, a Class B sized re-usable earplug and Class B custom-molded plugs, but will special-order other hearing protectors if necessary (see Appendix B for a complete list of all brands). The technician, during safety orientation of newhires, individually fits hearing protection. The fit and condition of hearing protection is also checked for all employees at the time of the annual hearing test.

Company policy requires use of hearing protection for all employees working in noisy areas (which are all posted with warning signs).

W.C.B. Hearing Conservation Section
Sample written program—Who, What, When

5. *Posting of Noise Hazard Areas*

All areas with noise levels greater than 85 dBA Lex have been posted with warning signs indicating hearing protection is required. Foremen check the condition of these signs on plant inspections. Replacement of signs is undertaken as necessary.

6. *Hearing Tests*

As a result of the noise exposure survey, occupations with noise exposed workers have been identified (see Appendix C for this list). Non-noise exposed employees are not tested.

Hearing tests are carried out as part of employee orientation in the first week of employment and annually thereafter. Workers are tested during their month of birth.

The industrial audiometric technicians have current authorization to test from the WCB Hearing Conservation Section and the hearing test facility is located in the Safety Department in a separate office. Hearing testing, counselling and recordkeeping are conducted in accordance with the O.H. & S. Regulation, Part 7 Sections 7.18 through 7.21.

Hearing test files are maintained under lock and key in the hygienist's private office and no copies are made without express written authorization of the worker.

Once a worker leaves our employ, the hearing tests are given to the worker as part of the exit process. If this is not possible, the tests are shredded by the hygienist in the Safety Department's confidential shredder.

Participation in the hearing test program is a condition of employment for noise-exposed employees at our mill.

7. *Program Review*

The audiometric technicians and the hygienist review annual statistical reports received from the WCB. A summary report with recommendations is sent to Health & Safety Committee. The technicians will report on hearing test participation, as well as crew talk participation, and hearing protection use trends and suggestions for improvement.

The review includes a comparison of our Early Warning Change percentage with that of the pulp and paper industry as a whole, as well as an analysis of trends in this indicator over time. A Hearing Conservation Program Checklist provided by the WCB is used to assist in determining whether all necessary program components have been addressed.

A summary report of the program review is prepared annually by the hygienist, and highlights are published in the plant newsletter.