



Education and Training

Workers need to understand the nature of the noise hazard they are exposed to, and how to protect their hearing. Employers **must** provide workers with certain information depending on the noise exposure received by the workers.

Where noise surveys show that worker exposures are between 82 and 85 dBA L_{ex} , employers **must** inform workers of the results of noise measurements and the possible risk of hearing loss. Annual hearing tests are not required for workers exposed to these noise levels, nor is the use of hearing protection, because the risk of developing hearing loss is very low. Optional hearing protection may be provided for workers irritated by the noise.

When noise exposures are above the exposure limits (over 85 dBA L_{ex} or 135 dBA peak), workers **must** be informed about the:

- Results of the noise survey
- Effects of noise on hearing
- Purpose of annual hearing testing
- Proper use and maintenance of hearing protection

As part of the written hearing conservation program, the type of training each worker will receive **must** be specified. This education and training can be incorporated into short crew talks for workers and should be part of the health and safety training provided to new employees.

Another opportunity for worker education is during the annual hearing test. Workers must receive individual counselling from the audiometric technician regarding their hearing test results. This is a good time to also

review the use and care of workers' hearing protection, and to reinforce information on the effects of noise on hearing and the purpose of hearing testing.

If your company has in-house audiometric technicians, they **must** have adequate training and attend periodic refresher courses to be authorized to conduct hearing tests. These courses include training in the selection, fitting, and use of hearing protection.

Education and training are also required for the coordinator of the hearing conservation program and for those who issue and fit hearing protection. Supervisors should receive sufficient education about company hearing conservation policies so that they can monitor the use and condition of hearing protection, and ensure workers attend their scheduled annual hearing tests.

WCB Hearing Conservation staff are available to consult with employers and safety committees about the content and design of an education and training program for workers. Videos, films, posters, and other materials on the topic of hearing conservation are available from the WCB's Publications and Videos Section. Two WCB brochures, *Testing Your Hearing—How and Why?* and *Hear for Good*, provide basic information to workers on hearing testing and hearing protection. *The Hearing Video*, produced by the WCB, provides similar information in an entertaining format.