



1.11 Hearing Conservation

1. General Administration - Administrative Procedure Manual

INTRODUCTION

The Pine Creek School Division is committed to providing a safe and healthy environment for all employees, students, and visitors. The following administrative procedure on Hearing Conservation is designed to prevent noise-induced hearing loss by providing engineering and administrative controls, hearing protective devices, audiometric testing procedures, and employee training. Employees who are exposed to workplace noise at or above 80 dBA Lex for extended periods must be provided with opportunities to access the Hearing Conservation and Noise Conservation Program outlined below.

PROGRAM

1. The Workplace Safety and Health Committee shall be informed and involved in the Hearing Conservation and Noise Conservation Program within their worksite. The Committee will be provided with a copy of the exposure assessment and hearing education program for each worksite/program where required.
2. Sound Level Surveys will be conducted where the committee knows or has reason to believe that sound levels exceed 80 dBA Lex.
3. Where sound levels exceed acceptable limits, and in order to reduce identified noise levels, engineering control measures will be investigated and used wherever practicable.

MANAGEMENT RESPONSIBILITIES

In accordance with the Workplace Safety and Health Act, the Division is responsible to ensure:

1. Compliance with Manitoba Regulation 217/2006 requirements;
2. A noise exposure assessment is conducted and posted in a conspicuous place in the workplace when:
 - a. an employee is exposed, or is likely to be exposed to noise in excess of 80 dBA Lex at a workplace
 - b. there is an alteration, renovation or repair of the workplace, or installation of new equipment that is noise-generating
 - c. there is a modification to a work process that may result in a significant change in the employee's exposure to noise
 - d. if an employee provides management with evidence of an occupationally induced hearing loss
3. Warning signs indicating that a work area is above 85 dBA Lex are posted at the entrance of that work area;
4. Audiometric tests are conducted once per year for all employees assigned to work in designated areas over 85 dBA Lex;
5. Audiometric hearing tests are to be performed within 70 days of employment on employees who work in designated areas over 85 dBA Lex;
6. All levels of management and employees are aware of the control measures to reduce exposure to noise;

7. All employees are encouraged to cooperate in using agreed safe work practices;
8. Information on noise, the risks of exposure to noise, and the appropriate control measures are disseminated in a manner appropriate to the workplace;
9. A comprehensive personal hearing protection program, including the selection of personal hearing protectors, and instruction of employees in their correct use and maintenance, is implemented; and
10. Employees receive appropriate training and education when it is required.

EMPLOYEE RESPONSIBILITIES

In accordance with the Workplace Safety and Health Act and as far as is practicable, it is the responsibility of the employee to comply with all regulation requirements and established workplace safe work procedures in all areas where sound surveys are above 80 dBa Lex.

PROVISION OF PROTECTIVE HEARING EQUIPMENT

If an employee is exposed, or is likely to be exposed to noise in a workplace that exceeds 80dBa Lex but does not exceed 85 dBa Lex, the Division shall inform the employee about the hazards of the level of noise and on the request of the employee, provide the employee with hearing protection.

Where noise levels exceed the limits of 85 dBa Lex and it is not possible to reduce those noise levels, the Division will provide appropriate protective hearing equipment. Should hearing protection be required in a specific area of risk, Pine Creek School division shall provide it for the employee.

EMPLOYEE PURCHASE OF CUSTOMIZED PROTECTIVE HEARING EQUIPMENT

Employees who work in a specific area of risk may purchase an approved customized hearing protection device and receive compensation for such purchase from the Division to a maximum of \$250. Employees who wish to purchase personal hearing protection are required to consult with the Division's Maintenance Coordinator prior to the purchase. Once the Maintenance Coordinator has approved hearing protection, the employee can move forward with the purchase and afterward seek reimbursement from the Division.

After the employee purchases customized personal hearing protection, it will be the responsibility of the employee to take all measures necessary to maintain the device for its suggested life expectancy. Employee reimbursement of customized personal hearing protection will occur on a 3-year rotational basis. Any damage that may occur to the customized hearing protection device prior to the end of the three-year span will be the responsibility of the employee unless the employee can present evidence that damage to the device occurred in the process of performing the employee's assigned duties.

AUDIOMETRIC HEARING TESTING

1. Audiometric testing of staff who work in an areas where noise levels may approach 85 dBa Lex will be carried out in accordance with Manitoba Regulation 217/2006. These high-risk areas include Industrial Arts shops, Music and Band Classrooms, and Gymnasias.

2. Should there be a concern regarding an area other than the above listed locations, noise level testing can, upon request, be conducted and test results confirmed on a case-by-case basis.
3. Once per year, audiometric tests will be performed on all employees assigned to work in the specified high-risk areas. A qualified audiologist, whose services will be retained and paid for by the Division, will conduct the testing.
4. All new employees assigned to work in any of the designated areas will be tested within seventy (70) days of employment to establish a base line audiogram, and annually thereafter.
5. Any employee transferred or moved from a non-designated area to a designated area will be tested within seventy (70) days of the transfer or move, and annually thereafter.
6. Employees who work in several areas, and where only some areas are designated, will be part of the Hearing Conservation Program and tested annually.
7. An audiometric test will be conducted at the time of departure on all exiting employees who worked in a designated area and who leave the employ of The Division.
8. All medical records (individual worker results) must remain with the audiologist. However, a record will be kept in the employee's personnel file, indicating all of those employees who participate in the Hearing Conservation Program, and a notation will be made in their individual training file.

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