Hearing Conservation Policy

Purpose and Scope

The purpose of this Hearing Conservation Policy is to protect employees from the adverse effects of excessive noise exposure. This policy covers all Western Michigan University employees who may be exposed to noise while performing their work activities.

Responsibilities

The Environmental Health and Safety (EHS) department will monitor those jobs which have an obvious noise exposure or for which faculty and staff request that their noise exposure be monitored. EHS will notify the affected employees and their department if the noise levels equal or exceed the Time-Weighted Average (TWA) of 85 dBA. EHS will provide the training on noise conservation, they shall also approve the facility that will be providing the audiometric exams to ensure that the audiometric exams meet the requirements of the MIOSHA Noise Standard.

Those jobs which expose an employee to a TWA noise level equal to or greater than 85 dBA will require that the employee be placed in a Hearing Conservation Program as outlined by the Michigan Occupational Safety and Health Administration (MIOSHA) Part-380 (Occupational Noise exposure). Those jobs that expose an employee to a TWA noise level equal to or greater than 90 dBA will require that the employee wear hearing protection unless the noise levels can be reduced by engineering controls. EHS will approve the available types of hearing protection.

A Hearing Conservation Program requires that a baseline audiometric exam be given to affected employees followed by a yearly audiometric exam as long as the employee is exposed to noise levels as described above. If a comparison of the annual audiogram to the baseline audiogram indicates a standard threshold shift, EHS shall inform the employee of that fact in writing within 21 days of the determination. Those departments that have employees in the Hearing Conservation program shall provide hearing protection to those employees.

The supervisors of employees who are exposed to noise levels that equal or exceed a TWA of 85 dBA must ensure that the hearing protection worn by their employees is readily available to them. Supervisors of employees whose jobs expose them to noise levels that equal or exceed 90 dBA must enforce the requirement that the employees wear hearing protection. If a standard threshold shift is confirmed by annual testing, an accident/injury report form (311) must be completed by the affected employee and their supervisor then submitted to the EHS office.

Revised on 8/2012