



## Hearing Conservation Plan

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Appendix 1: Record of Enrollment in Hearing Conservation Program

Appendix 2: List of Job Task, Area or Equipment Needing Workplace Noise Controls

## I. Objective

The objective of the Tufts University Hearing Conservation Plan is to minimize occupational hearing loss by providing hearing protection, training and annual hearing tests to all persons working in areas or with equipment that have noise levels equal to or exceeding an eight-hour time-weighted average (TWA) sound limit of 85 dBA (decibels measured on the A scale of a sound level meter). A copy of this program will be maintained by University departments whose employees are exposed to sound levels above 85 dBA. A copy of OSHA's Hearing Conservation Standard, 29 CFR 1910.95 or 29 CFR 1926.52 can be obtained from Tufts Environmental Health and Safety (TEHS). All areas of the University in which the sound level does or could exceed 85 dBA will be posted: High Noise Area; Authorized persons only, Hearing protection may be required.

## II. Assignment of Responsibility

### A. *Department Chairpersons, Directors or designated persons*

1. Contact TEHS for evaluation of areas or equipment that produce loud noise levels.
2. Implement engineering and administrative controls to limit employee exposure.
3. Supply adequate hearing protection to limit employee exposure.
4. Enforce compliance with hearing protection procedures and practices as outlined by this plan.

### B. *Tufts Environmental Health and Safety (TEHS)*

1. Conduct noise monitoring annually or when new equipment is added.
2. Coordinate hearing tests for employees.
3. Conduct initial and annual hearing conservation training for employees.
4. Maintain Tufts University Hearing Conservation Plan.

### C. *Supervisors*

1. Assure signs and warnings in all high noise areas are posted.
2. Provide task-specific training on controls and/or on the use of hearing protection.
3. Enforce compliance with hearing protection procedures and practices as outlined by this plan.

### D. *Employees*

1. Use company-issue approved hearing protection in designated high noise areas.
2. Request new hearing protection when needed.
3. Exercise proper care of issued hearing protection.

## III. Procedures

### A. *Noise Monitoring*

1. Monitoring for noise exposure levels will be conducted by TEHS. It is the responsibility of the individual departments to notify the Campus EHS Manager when there is a possible need for monitoring. Monitoring will be performed with the use of sound level meters and personal dosimeters at the discretion of the Campus EHS Manager.
2. Monitoring will also be conducted whenever there is a change in equipment, process or controls that affect the noise levels. This includes the addition or removal of machinery, alteration in building structure, or substitution of new equipment in place of that previously

used. The responsible supervisor must inform the **Campus EHS Manager** when these types of changes are instituted.

### ***B. Employee Training***

1. Affected employees will be required to attend training concerning the proper usage and wearing of hearing protection. The training will be conducted by the **Campus EHS Manager**, or a designated representative, within a month of hire and annually thereafter.
2. Training shall consist of the following components:
  - a. how noise affects hearing and hearing loss;
  - b. review of the OSHA hearing protection standard;
  - c. explanation of audiometric testing;
  - d. rules and procedures;
  - e. locations within company property where hearing protection is required; and
  - f. how to use and care for hearing protectors.
3. Training records will be maintained by **TEHS**.

### ***C. Hearing Protection***

In all areas with equipment or processes that produce noise levels greater than 85 dBA hearing protection is required. These areas will be identified by signage stating, "High Noise Area; Authorized Persons Only, Hearing Protection may be required." In such areas, management, supervisors, and employees shall properly wear hearing protection while working or traveling through any area. This does not mean that employees are exposed to sound levels of 85 dBA as an eight-hour average and are enrolled in this program. Contact the **Campus EHS Manager** with questions or for a list of high noise areas.

1. Hearing protection will be provided at no cost to employees who perform tasks designated as having a high noise exposure; they will be replaced as necessary. It is the supervisor's responsibility to require employees to wear hearing protection when noise levels reach or exceed 85 dBA. Those employees will have the opportunity to choose from at least two different types of hearing protection.
2. Personal stereo headsets, such as "Walkmen" or MP3 players, that are not approved to provide hearing protection and are not permitted in any operating area.
3. Signage is required in areas that necessitate hearing protection. It is the responsibility of the **Supervisor** to provide signage to the appropriate areas.
4. Hearing protection shall be used and maintained according to the manufacturer's instructions. Preformed earplugs and earmuffs should be washed periodically and stored in a clean area. Foam inserts should be discarded after each use. Hands should be washed before handling preformed earplugs and foam inserts to prevent contaminants from being placed in the ear.
5. **The Supervisor and the Campus EHS Manager** will keep a log of the areas, job tasks or equipment designated as requiring workplace controls, and a separate log listing the personnel in this Hearing Conservation Plan (see Appendix 1, 2).

### ***D. Audiograms (Hearing Tests)***

1. Employees subject to the Hearing Conservation Program who have time-weighted average (TWA) noise exposures of 85 dBA or greater for an eight (8) hour work shift will be required to have both a baseline and annual audiogram. The audiograms will be provided by Tufts University and conducted by an **Occupational Medical Service** with no cost to the employee.

2. The baseline audiogram will be given to an employee within one (1) month of employment with *Tufts University* and before any exposure to high noise levels. Annual audiograms will be performed within one year from the date of the previous audiogram. It is the responsibility of the employee and the supervisor to schedule the annual audiogram.
  
3. If an annual audiogram shows that an employee has suffered a standard threshold shift, the employee will be retested within thirty (30) days of the annual audiogram. If the retest confirms the occurrence of a standard threshold shift, the employee will be notified in writing within twenty-one (21) days of the confirmation. Employees who do experience a standard threshold shift will be refitted with hearing protection and provided more training on the effects of noise.



