

Maricopa County Policies and Procedures	Subject: Hearing Conservation	Number: A2220 Issue Date: 11/91
Approved: Roy Pederson	Initiating Department: Risk Management	

A. Purpose

To protect the hearing of County employees through a program of hearing conservation.

B. Policy

County work areas which may expose employees to an 8-hour time-weighted average of 85 dBA must be monitored to obtain measurements. If any employees suspect that their work area is at or above an average of 85 dBA for an 8-hour day, they should report this to their supervisor who shall request, through appropriate channels, that Risk Management check or re-check the suspected area. Some OSHA examples of suspect areas are extended hours of exposure near the following equipment: bulldozers, roadgraders, open-cab trucks, power mowers, air compressors, boiler rooms, generators, and printing presses.

C. Definitions

The Industrial Commission of the State of Arizona, Division of Occupational Safety and Health (ADOSH), Occupational Noise Exposure Rule includes an Amendment entitled: "Hearing Conservation Program." This amendment directly affects the county by requiring that whenever employees are exposed to an average of 85 decibels (dBA) for an 8-hour-day, the County must administer a continuing, effective hearing conservation program as described in 29 CFR Part 1910.95.

D. Authority and Responsibility

The County shall make audiometric testing available to all employees whose exposure equals or exceeds an 8-hour time-weighted average of 85 decibels. Audiometric tests shall be accomplished by a person certified to perform such tests.

E. Procedures

1. The County shall establish for each employee exposed to an 8-hour time-weighted average of 85 dBA a Baseline Audiogram for comparison with subsequent audiograms. Audiograms shall be obtained annually and compared to the employee's baseline audiogram to determine if a significant threshold shift has occurred.
2. An audiologist, otolaryngologist, or qualified physician shall review the audiograms to determine whether there is need for further evaluation. Copies of the audiograms and related records shall be maintained with the employee's medical file by the County.
3. Employees exposed to an 8-hour time-weighted average (TWA) noise level of 85 dBA or higher shall be issued hearing protectors and be trained in their use and care.
4. Employees exposed to an 8-hour TWA of 85 dBA or higher are required to use the hearing protectors whenever they are in the area of such exposure. In the event of loss or damage to any personally fitted hearing protectors provided to the employee by the County, the employee is responsible for reporting such loss or damage to his or her supervisor. The employee must be given new hearing protectors prior to returning to the job.

5. New employees in jobs where exposure is anticipated to be at an 8-hour TWA of 85 dBA or higher shall be identified so that audiometric examinations may be accomplished during the pre-employment physical. A copy of the audiogram shall be evaluated, placed in the new employee's medical file, and be identified as the Baseline Audiogram.
6. Risk Management should be contacted to schedule training for all employees who are exposed to noise at or above time-weighted average of 85 dBA. All employees so exposed are required to attend the initial training program. The training program will be repeated annually.